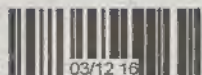


SOCCER

VOL. 23 No. 1116 — TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2002



REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIAN POST
PUBLICATIONS No. HBQ5726

WEEKLY

\$3.60
GST INCLUSIVE

AUSTRALIAN SOCCER'S FUTURE ON THE LINE?

By Mark Stavroulakis & Daniel Kuzlow

The revolving door that was Soccer Australia looks to have last slowed with an air of stability now hanging in the air.

Following the mid week resignations of Ian Knop, Nick Greiner, Graeme Bowker and Alan Vessey, the Board of Commissioners of acting Chairman Les Avory, Paul Afkos, Dominic Galati, Robert Sestan and Bill Walker restored some much-needed credibility by holding their first Board meeting and pledging unity in pursuing the goals of Soccer Australia.

"With the recent resignations of a number of individuals associated with Soccer Australia, there has been much media and public speculation surrounding the continued goals of the current Board of Soccer Australia," said Avory.

"The Board of Soccer Australia would like to reassure the public and corporate supporters of our great world game that we are determined to move forward across a range of issues that challenge Soccer Australia at this moment. We have just held a Board meeting that displayed complete unity among the elected representatives of the game in Australia, with healthy discussion on a number of important issues.

The Annual General Meeting of Soccer Australia held on October 26 was the catalyst for the immediate demise of the former board. A host of new anti-Knop nominees led by Dominic Galati were elected to the Board of Commissioners and last Wednesday the tumultuous 15-month reign of Ian Knop came to an end. President Nick Greiner, Chief Executive Alan Vessey and board member Graeme Bowker also tendered their resignations in a day that made the governing body blush with further humiliation.

Choosing to jump rather than be pushed, Knop chose to waive his stay of execution - pencilled in for December 7 when Soccer Australia were to convene. It was here that Knop was to have been shown the door as an extraordinary election had been called for all stakeholders to vote on his future. However reports suggested that as early as two weeks ago the necessary numbers had already been collected to cause his demise.

In a statement released immediately after the coup, Knop Greiner

and Bowker spelt out their opinion of the current board saying: "Specifically, we believe that the majority of the Board are opposed to improving Soccer Australia's constitution and establishing new levels of corporate governance and professionalism for the game. This is also reflected in their opposition to the Crawford Enquiry which has been established by the Australian Sports Commission."

"We also believe that a majority of the new board are now embarking on a range of actions which, in our opinion, are not in the best interests of the game. We do not intend to discuss these publicly, however we cannot remain on this Board whilst we do not support the actions certain directors are taking. Suffice to say, the corporate governance attitudes and behaviour of the majority are quite unacceptable to us."

Perhaps though it is not surprising that the Knop-led organisation were finally ousted. In August of this year, Nick Greiner essentially brought to light the inaction of SA, telling the Sportswatch program: "I have not lifted the smallest of my small fingers to encourage [the improvement of SA] because in the last 12 months it would have been an exercise in absolute futility."

"We didn't deliver to our sponsors in the previous World Cup campaign (losing a playoff to Uruguay) and so why would anyone say come and invest, be part of the soccer team, unless and until you could go with your hand on your heart and say 'look, this is really well organised, we've got our act together'."

Vice-chairman Les Avory has since taken temporary control of the depleted board and along with the remaining committee has vowed continue to move the corporation in a forward direction. At their first meeting on Friday, four key goals were identified by the reformed board. A statement released shortly after spelt out their concerns:

* The Board and stakeholders have committed themselves to reforming our premier domestic competition, the National Soccer League, so that we can have an autonomous, dynamic and prosperous competition that complements the career path for the growing record number of soccer participants in Australia.



Ian Knop and Nick Greiner bid farewell to Soccer Australia after weeks of speculation and inhouse bickering.

* The Board of Soccer Australia unequivocally supports the terms of reference of the current review by the Australian Sports Commission and will provide

whatever support is necessary to ensure the integrity of the process.

* The financial position of Soccer Australia is currently being

addressed and following discussions with ASIC we are complying with its requests in a confident and timely manner.

* Our relationship with our long-term broadcasting partner Channel 7 is currently under review and discussions are continuing."

The one concern for the new board nevertheless is the way each of these will be addressed. These issues are the ones that caused the downfall of the former board. How will they now be addressed.

At this point in time the future chairman of Soccer Australia looks likely to be former Perth Glory owner Paul Afkos or current National League chairman Remo Nogarotto.

Various meetings have been drafted in a bid to resurge Australian soccer as for far too long loyal soccer fans have suffered due to bad administration through Australian soccer's hierarchy.

It's evident to see that Australian soccer's political figures have grabbed the spotlight from the National League players this season - a trend that is quite embarrassing but without a true indication of what will happen next, worrying times are still to be seen the Australian game.

Soccer Australia is said to be talking to 'high profile' businessmen in a ploy to bring the game forward with names such as millionaire and Westfield's owner Frank Lowy mentioned as possible inclusions towards helping soccer's cause in Australia.

However the recent National League week saw crowd averages plummet to a new low with poor attendances at Northern Spirit (believed to be under 1000), Newcastle United (2003) and Perth Glory (9637) who normally average 15-16 thousand at every home match in Perth Oval.

UNITED GRIND OUT VICTORY

By Daniel Kuzlow

Sydney United's Enders Park home has this season become a fortress for the home side and a graveyard for hapless visiting sides.

In the much-anticipated derby between United and the Marconi Stallions, the trend continued with the home side coming away with the derby spoils following a two-nil win over their neighbours.

Branko Culina's men scored a goal either side of half time, with Brendan Santalab scoring from the penalty spot in the 34th minute and Ante Dzur grabbing the all-important second goal in the 64th minute.

With their Stallion neighbours travelling no more than five kilometres for the match, the victory gave the hosts bragging rights for the next twelve months.

The Olympic Sharks meanwhile maintained their five point buffer at the top of the table, easily accounting for the Wollongong Wolves by three goals to nil.

As is often the case the match came alive minutes before half time. A delightful Andrew Packer pass found Ante Milicic on the edge of the Wolves penalty area where he proceeded to audaciously chip the Andrew Crews for the game's opener.

Olympic then doubled their lead in the 52nd minute with a cracking goal from Andrew Durante when he unleashed a drive from 30 yards out that was still rising as it nestled into

the top corner and the game was sealed into injury time when Joel Porter fired home from the edge of the penalty area. South Melbourne continued their impressive run of late with a single goal victory over the hapless Parramatta Power.



Tensions flared up between Troy Halpin (Right) and Dino Mennillo (Left) during the Sharks comfortable three-nil win last Sunday.

In a week already stained by the announcement that the Power could be no more, Vagghan Coveny netted on 85 minutes as he bundled the ball over the goal line following

good lead up work from Vince Lia and veteran Paul Trimboli.

South's victory cemented their position in the top four and was helped after the Perth Glory registered a one-nil victory over the well-placed Adelaide City Force.

It was another late goal, this time from Nick Mrdja, who with some seven minutes remaining pounced to score the winner and keep the Glory on the heels of the Sharks.

In the remaining two matches, Newcastle United scored three goals but could not overcome the Brisbane Strikers.

United took an two goal lead into half time, following goals from Esala Masi and Peter Tsekenis but the Strikers rallied producing a second half surge to dramatically take a shock three-two lead. But inform striker Joel Griffiths rescued a point for the Novocastrians hitting the equaliser after 81 minutes and taking him to the top of the goal scoring charts with eight goals.

The Northern Spirit moved up to ninth on the back of an inspired Adam Kwasnik performance. He scored his first goal in the NSL and the Spirit's first after some 18 minutes and played a major role in setting up the Spirit's winner on 65 minutes as he released another youngster Jonathon Richter to give the home side a much needed two goal buffer and the three competition points.

The Knights scored a late consolation goal through new Uruguayan import Gustavo Biscayzacu, his second in as many games.

AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

Issue No. 1116

"Published every Tuesday by
F.L. Press
118-124 Bourke Rd,
Alexandria NSW 2015

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MAILING ADDRESS
118-124 Bourke Rd,
Alexandria NSW 2015

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Overseas: \$255 (GST incl.)

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Deadline for contributions, articles
and advertising is 3 days PRIOR to
issue date.

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A British press report claims that Socceroos striker Mark Viduka has been involved in an ugly bust-up with Leeds teammate Danny Mills following the club's shock Worthington Cup exit earlier this month.

The Daily Express reports that the pair were yelling at each other at the top of their lungs after Mills confronted Viduka when the Aussie criticised the team's defence for letting in two late goals in the 2-1 defeat to Sheffield United.

Manager Terry Venables apparently met with both players at a team meeting to sort out the mess.

★★★★
Sky Sports have revealed that Birmingham City winger Stan Lazaridis remains hopeful he will be offered a new contract by the St Andrews club.

City boss Steve Bruce has given Lazaridis an opportunity to impress in recent games and the 30-year-old has earned a regular spot with his performances.

However, Lazaridis only has seven months of his current deal at Birmingham to run.

The Australian international produced his best performance for the club in Saturday's 1-0 success at Sunderland and he has added defensive qualities to his natural attacking game.

He said: "I really enjoy it here and I would like to stay but it's in the hands of the manager and the club."

★★★★
Planetfootball.com have revealed that Rochdale manager Paul Simpson would like to keep on-loan Leeds United star Shane Cansdell-Sheriff at the club.

The 20-year-old has made two appearances for the club and has impressed the coaching staff.

The former Central Coast star is due back at Elland Road on

Sunday December 8, however Simpson is hoping the defender will remain at Spotland.

"I've spoken to the people at Leeds regarding Shane's stay at Spotland and they are happy for us to continue on a month-to-month basis," said Simpson to the club's official website.

"We will look at the situation at the beginning of December, when his loan period is up, and will see if we can extend it for another month, then decide if we want to do anything more about it."

★★★★
Despite the dramatic events surrounding the resignation of Ian Knop and three other Soccer Australia board members, the much-anticipated match between England and Australia will still go ahead.

Gary Moretti toldsportinglife.com: "We want to make it perfectly clear that there is absolutely no doubt that the game will go ahead."

"Soccer Australia are totally committed and enthusiastic about the friendly."

"We have already written to the English Football Association to allay any worries they may have."

★★★★
Empoli general manager Giuseppe Vitale has again confirmed their interest in bringing Marco Bresciano back to the club in January.

Bresciano joined Parma over the summer, but has so far failed to cement a regular starting place.

"Bresciano and Marchionni have been two important players for Empoli in the past and I'm sure they will become important also for Parma," Vitale was quoted on tribalfutbol.com.

"Empoli aren't interested in signing them on permanent transfers, but if Parma decided to loan at least one, I cannot hide that

we'd be very interested in bringing either of them back here."

Meanwhile Vitale has said the club will fight to hold onto Aussie midfielder Vince Grella



Stan Lazaridis: Hopeful of a new deal at St Andrews.

when the January transfer window opens.

Grella has attracted the interest of Juventus sports chief Luciano Moggi this season and Empoli are bracing themselves for a bidding war in the New Year.

Vitale admitted: "It's true that Grella is being followed by the big clubs of Italy. "But, as is the case with our other top players, we don't intend to discuss his transfer when the window opens and won't consider his future at Empoli until after February."

★★★★

Middlesbrough have angrily denied reports that Mark Schwarzer could be sold if a big bid comes in, by insisting the keeper is "going nowhere".

However, Boro chief executive Keith Lamb insists there is no truth in the rumours that they



Rochdale manager Paul Simpson is eager to keep Shane Cansdell-Sheriff on loan from Leeds United for a longer period of time.

would sell the keeper if a sizeable came up and has said the keeper is perfectly happy to stay at The Riverside.

He said: "It's absolute rubbish. There is no truth in the quotes."

"I have spoken to Mark Schwarzer. He is perfectly happy at Middlesbrough. He and his family are settled."

"He is enjoying his football and he is not going anywhere."

Speaking to the Evening Gazette, he added: "He is not available for transfer and we are

not listening to offers."

After slaughtering Silkman's comments, Lamb suggested that the agent was merely hoping to force Middlesbrough's hands in new contract negotiations for his client.

Silkman had been quoted as saying: "Normally when a player is near to going into the last 18 months of his contract, he would have begun talks or agreed terms, but this has not happened with Middlesbrough."

"We are surprised something has not been done at this stage."

"Mark loves it at Middlesbrough, but if an offer came in from a big club — which is a possibility — then it would be seriously considered."

Likewise another Aussie goalkeeper looks set to become a part of the Boro setup.

With Mark Crossley joining



Mark Schwarzer: Middlesbrough insist their goalkeeper isn't the subject of transfer speculation.

would be sending him down under in January.

Dobbie, who has already donned the Spirit colours in the concluding rounds of last season's NSL was the subject of transfer speculation again linking him with the club.

Ibrox Under-21 coach John McGregor told the official Rangers website: "I haven't been in contact with Northern Spirit about Stephen Dobbie since he returned from Australia earlier this year, so I don't know where these new stories have come from."

"The lad has just come back from a foot injury and isn't actually fully fit yet but, as far as everyone at the club is concerned, Stephen is going nowhere."

★★★★



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Argentina on their Way?

Soccer Australia board member and IEC general manager Dominic Galati has indicated that the governing body is close to sealing a deal to bring Argentina to Australia and for another friendly against Yugoslavia.

Reports in *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper, also suggest that Galati is trying to organise a \$5m IEC promotion to bring European club giants Real Madrid to Australia to face the Socceroos in June.

Galati has emerged as a powerful member on the Soccer Australia board following the departure of Ian Knop as chairman and will surely have a large influence in determining who replaces him.

National Soccer League chairman Remo Nogarotto and Perth businessman Paul Afkos have both been named as potential candidates.

Galati, who has also been charged by Soccer

Australia with organising a release from its television rights contract with Channel 7, expressed his confidence of organising a number of high-profile friendlies for the Socceroos.

"Now Ian Knop has gone we will be able to tackle some soccer issues," Galati told the paper. "The friendly with England in February will definitely go ahead and we are close to sealing a fixture against Yugoslavia in March and Argentina in Australia in June."

"We have a totally united board and we will get things done. It's time to put an end to all the politics. Ian Knop had 15 months in charge. What did he achieve in that time? He got rid of IEC, which paid Soccer Australia \$3m, but never came up with anything better."

United in Development

After many months of negotiations, Sydney based Parramatta Eagles Soccer Academy (PESA), are pleased to announce an affiliation with the Kings Soccer Academy (KSA), and situated in Perth.

The deal comes as Manchester United look to strengthen ties with the Oceania region and follows the signing of a five-year agreement with the highly successful Parramatta Eagles set-up last year, as "The official youth development partners of Manchester United in Oceania."

The affiliation with Kings Soccer Academy marks the commencing of PESA's strategy to involve other quality Soccer Academies in the Oceania region in its youth development program with Manchester United.

"We have been very impressed with the quality of the people at KSA, the forward planning of its executive team, the quality of their football infrastructure and its absolute focus on developing elite youth football talent in Western Australia," said Don Allan, Chairman of PESA.

"We will be announcing similar affiliations with leading Soccer Academies in other states of Australia and the Oceania region very shortly. Our activities are directed at raising the level of football

education for elite players in our region of the world by utilising the coaching methods and support of Manchester United. In a short period of time, we have witnessed first hand at PESA, how effective the Manchester United coaching curriculum is and the immediate benefit it has provided our Academy players."

According to Mitch Doherty, the coaching director of the K.S.A. "We believe this agreement is an excellent opportunity for future development of W.A. youth soccer players and will have a lasting beneficial effect on the game here for many years to come."

"An important factor in this agreement is that the majority of our players will stay and play in W.A., and that we will continue to support local initiatives where we believe it is in the interest of the player or the local soccer scene."

"The aim and objective of the agreement we have entered into is to offer a career path to the very top of the professional game, to strengthen relations between W.A. soccer, the youth system in New South Wales, and the European game. We firmly believe that an association with the biggest 'football' club in the world, Manchester United, who hold a reputation for world's best practice youth development systems can only benefit our local talent."

Amongst the benefits offered to the Kings Academy will be access to the latest training techniques using drills and sessions developed and put in practice at Manchester United. The academy will also run coaching clinics throughout the state with the assistance of Parramatta Eagles."

"We have an opportunity to benchmark our players, with the best Australia has to offer, through the arrangement with Parramatta Eagles in Sydney, then, if any of our players fits the Manchester United profile, there is no limit on how far they can go."

The Kings Academy have so far exceeded all our expectations due in the main to the quality of people involved in administering and running the club.

However we all realise that in terms of junior soccer club in Western Australia, we are still in our infancy and that we have a great deal yet to learn and a long way to go to reach our goals.

Starting season 2003 associated with one of the

biggest names in world soccer, will certainly go a long way to assisting us to achieve our vision."

It is without doubt a fantastic opportunity for all our players and staff and everyone involved with the club are extremely excited about the future prospects."

Some of the immediate benefits of this association will see the Kings squads playing in the famous Manchester United colours of red and white, the squads will fine tune their techniques and skills using drills and sessions created and orchestrated by some of Europe's finest coaches.

"Interstate games against some of Australia's finest talents will no longer be an unreachable dream and all the players at the Kings Soccer Academy will be exposed to a program, designed to develop not only soccer skills, but also social skills, physical qualities, and mental strength, altogether culminating in your athletes who we expect will leave the academy, equipped with the tools to progress to future success."



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Parramatta Power On The Market

The National Soccer League has been hit with the news that one of its clubs - Parramatta Power - is set to close.

Many newspaper reports have stated that the Power will be shutting shop next year, but Parramatta have informed ABSW that they will fulfil their commitments up until the end of May.

Parramatta Leagues Club, which provides financial backing for both the Parramatta Eels rugby league side and the Power have invested \$10million since the club was formed four years ago.

But now the owners have informed all club staff and players they have put the ailing franchise up for sale.

Parramatta Leagues Club's chief executive Denis Fitzgerald, who is also vice chairman of the soccer club is hoping a European club will want to buy the Power.

"I think it is unlikely that Parramatta Leagues Club will continue to fund Parramatta Power beyond our commitment," said Fitzgerald.

"We will have invested some \$10million in the project and we are not prepared to devote that sort of money and resources to a national soccer team when there doesn't appear to be any light at the end of the tunnel in terms of pay TV coverage and major corporate support."

However in a Parramatta Power Press Release the club stated that they will show their commitment to the NSL until its license expires in May 2004.

"Following reports in last week's press, the Parramatta Leagues Club wishes to confirm that the Parramatta Power Soccer Club is on the market."

The Club wishes to re-affirm its commitment to the National Soccer League competition for the remainder of its license that expires in May 2004.

"We are not abandoning soccer", Parramatta Leagues Club Chief Executive Denis Fitzgerald said.

"We are encouraging an overseas



Denis Fitzgerald: Parramatta Leagues Club chief executive is hoping that a European club will buy the Power.

Club to take a majority, or total, equity share in the Parramatta Power, to ensure top level soccer remains at Parramatta Stadium", he added.

"The Parramatta Leagues Club has made an enormous financial contribution to the promotion of the game of soccer in recent years, and that will continue", Mr Fitzgerald said.

"In its three and a half year history, the Parramatta Power has done a fantastic job in identifying and developing talent. We are the current premiers of the National Youth League competition, and lead that competition again this season. The Power has also sold players like Brett Holman, Mile Sterjovski and Jacob Burns who have come through our program and continue to make their mark in European competitions". Mr Fitzgerald added, the press report stated.

Daniel Piorkowski: KNIGHTS RISING STAR

By Ben Moring

Australia has historically been regarded as an exporter of fine young talent. And the NSL has been a fine breeding ground, a competition that allows many a player an opportunity to cut their teeth before moving onto grander stages at some of Europe's glamour clubs.

Another such fledgling with a great chance of following in the footsteps of numerous Aussies is 18-year-old Melbourne Knights defender Daniel Piorkowski.

Piorkowski has been earning rave reviews from many this season and has been instrumental in the Knights' fantastic start to the season.

Having been afforded the chance to start in the majority of his club's matches owing to injuries to other players. That is not to say that the side lacks anything with Piorkowski at the back, he has been solid and learns more about his trade with each minute of playing time.

The highlight of any career is arguably to represent your country and this honour has been already bestowed upon the second youngest player at the Knights, having played for the Australs (under-20s) at the Festival Cup in Adelaide and also being picked for the under-20s squad, which recently flew to Vanuatu for World Cup qualifiers in that age group.

"It's always been a dream, says Piorkowski on representing Australia. "It's achieving my goals. It's what I've been striving for since I started as a youngster, it's just rewarding, the hard work pays off."

This season is not the first for Piorkowski, having made his debut last season and featuring in 7 subsequent matches and that experience has been telling in the development of the Knights' young star and that familiarity with the

NSL, coupled with a few injuries to more senior players has opened the door as he tells ABSW:

"I've sort of been a bit lucky in the fact that there's been a few injuries to the more experienced players, but Andrew's [Marth] shown good faith in me and has definitely pushed me along and encouraged me, definitely helped out in that factor same as Luciano Tranni.

"There's a couple of senior players, Steve Horvat and Ivan Jolic who are real-



Daniel Piorkowski: Melbourne Knights youngster currently involved in the Australian U20 set-up.

ly good for the young boys, especially last year being my first, they really encouraged me and showed me what to do and how to go about things. They definitely were the ones that honed my strengths, because without them it would have been tougher, it just was a really good enjoyable experience being with older players like that.

"I think I'm a bit more relaxed, I know the tempo of the game, I've got used to that now compared with the Youth League a couple of years ago. Once again, I've got to know the boys a lot better and gained a bit more respect."

Recently the side dipped into the transfer market to acquire the services of Uruguayan hit-man Gustavo Biscayzacu, to further bolster their push back to the top of the NSL.

And Piorkowski believes that it is a shrewd signing and also outlines the character of the Knights boys as prime factors in early season success.

"I think he's just boosted everyone's confidence and belief, he said. "Knowing that he's a player added to the squad with such ability, he's probably still not 100% fit, but what he's shown at training and in the game he looks a good prospect."

"The side's shown great character coming back from a couple of close calls where we almost lost late in the game and we've come back from being two-nil down and stuff like that, so the side is stronger in that regard compared to last year's squad. A bit more character and belief I think."

Pressed as to what his goals are for the rest of this campaign:

"I think it's just to keep playing regularly, he states. "Also just to have a good season and hopefully be heading overseas for a trial."

"I think the Dutch League, the German League. Even Belgium or somewhere like that just to start off with."

ALL THE PRESIDENTS MEN

By Allan Crisp

Protocol dictates that Basil Scarsella as president of the Oceania Confederation should maintain an air of impartiality when attending football games.

Exceptions to that rule can surely be made when the regions top man goes to watch his sons, David or Mark play the game at which he excelled when he was their age.

David, 20, is Adelaide City Force goalkeeper, while Mark, 18, is a stopper with Premier League club Adelaide Galaxy.

A hectic lifestyle as he balances his "real" job as CEO, Electricity Trust of South Australia Utilities and his presidency duties, prevents Basil Scarsella from fully following the sporting fortunes of his sons.

When the rare occasions arrive and he is able to watch his lads in action, fatherly pride glows.

As it did at Adelaide City's last home game at Hindmarsh Stadium when David made a magnificent NSL debut in the 1-1 draw with Northern Spirit.



The skies the limit for promising young Force custodian David Scarsella.

The proud dad attempted to ease his nervous tension by standing for the full 90 minutes in the SASF Corporate Box as David made a string of remarkable saves to keep the Force in contention.

And, the "old man" knew exactly what was required because he was a top-flight goalkeeper with SA club Campbelltown City.

David and Mark began their soccer careers at the St Francis School team before joining Adelaide City juniors.

Mark has been with Galaxy for two seasons, but has only been afforded four Premier League starts.

He intends to stay at Galaxy, reasoning that his chances of becoming a regular should improve next season because of a mass exodus of first team players.

Meanwhile, David, who began the NSL season as City's number three goalkeeper behind Daniel Godley and Ian Martin, seized his chance when he was promoted for the Northern Spirit match.

With Godley on the injured list, City had planned to sign Spirit custodian Lupce Acevski, but Scarsella's debut form and the speedy recovery of

Godley has seen the club shelve that idea.

David heaps praise on the senior City players who have encouraged him during his baptism in the NSL squad.

"Adelaide City goalkeeper coach Chris Terpcou has been terrific with his advice and training methods," Scarsella said.

David is a graduate of the SA Sports Institute, under chief coach Martyn Crook, the former Australian and West Adelaide Sharks goalkeeper.

David's talented glove work was earlier recognised with selection in the Australian Schoolboys team and in SA Junior State teams.

"My main goal is to cement a regular place in the Adelaide City NSL team and I intent to work hard to achieve that," David pledged.

Mark mirrors those objectives, but in his case, the tall defender has his sights set on that first team spot at Camden Reserve with Galaxy.

While as a goalkeeper David may not always have his feet firmly on the ground, he and his younger brother do not, like most of their peers, have any immediate or long-term ambitions to



SONS OF A GUN - David Scarsella (age 5) saves a penalty from brother Mark (age 3).

play overseas.

That's because David is studying Economics and Mark is taking Law and Commerce at the Adelaide University.

Motivation and advice on those career decisions came from the same person who applauds the sporting heroics of his sons.

David rates Spanish football as the ultimate competition in the world, but he also rates his fathers advice on his future very highly.

So, its study before full time professional soccer for the talented Scarsella lads who are truly the presidents men.

Letters of Resignation by SA Members

Explained in the next two articles are the reasons why Nick Greiner, Ian Knop, Graeme Bowker and Alan Vessey all decided to call it a day at Soccer Australia.

At this point in time Les Avory is currently acting

Chairman at SA and an extraordinary meeting has been organized within the week to discuss replacements for the departed officials.

The remaining SA Board of Commissioners are:

Mr Les Avory, acting Chairman
Mr Paul Afkos
Mr Dominic Galati
Mr Robert Sestan
Mr Bill Walker

Statement from Alan Vessey Chief Executive of Soccer Australia

Today (Wednesday 27-11) I have tendered my resignation to the Board of Soccer Australia by giving four weeks notice, effective Friday 29 November 2002.

Events of the last two months have clearly confirmed that my philosophy and vision for the game is inconsistent with the direction the game appears to be heading under the stewardship of a majority of the Board of Directors.

I am not prepared to alter my position or

values and reluctantly have taken this step.

It is important that I place on record my appreciation to all staff at Soccer Australia for their unwavering support, provided at times under very difficult circumstances.

May I also extend my appreciation to all stakeholder personnel for their goodwill and assistance during my tenure with the company.

Alan Vessey
Chief Executive
SOCCER AUSTRALIA

Statement From Messrs Greiner, Knop & Bowker

Following the Soccer Australia Board of Commissioners meeting today (Wednesday 27-11), we have tendered our resignations from our respective positions at Soccer Australia.

We have reluctantly come to this decision because of a number of factors.

At the Annual General Meeting on 26 October, 2002, the stakeholders elected a new board. Since that time, we have attempted to work with the Board in a positive fashion and continue the reform program we have established over the past twelve months.

It has become clear to us that the majority of the new Board are opposed to the reform program.

Specifically, we believe that the majority of the Board are opposed to improving Soccer Australia's constitution and establishing new levels of corporate governance and professionalism for the game. This is also reflected in their opposition to the Crawford Enquiry which has been established by the Australian Sports Commission.

We also believe that a majority of the new board are now embarking on a range of actions which, in our opinion, are not in the best interests of the game. We do not

intend to discuss these publicly, however we cannot remain on this Board whilst we do not support the actions certain directors are taking. Suffice to say, the corporate governance attitudes and behaviour of the majority are quite unacceptable to us.



Ex-Soccer Australia officials Ian Knop (left) and Nick Greiner.

We remain totally committed to reforming and improving the way soccer is run and managed in Australia. In our view, reform is absolutely essential if soccer is ever to reach its true potential. Sadly, we do not believe the new Board shares this view. We intend to continue to work with the Australian Sports Commission to assist the reform process.

We strongly believe there have been many positive achievements at Soccer Australia over the past year, such as; stabilising the financial position and winning

back the marketing assets of the Socceroos and the National Soccer League; the establishment of the National Planning Forum which brings together all of the state, territory and amateur bodies for the first time; reform of the National Registration Fee to provide a sound capitalisation base for Soccer Australia; the establishment of a strategic program for the Socceroos beginning with the game against England in February; and, of course, the establishment of the Crawford Enquiry.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to the many stakeholders, supporters, mums and dads, and participants of this great game who have given us such positive encouragement throughout our term, and particularly in recent weeks.

We would like to specially thank those bodies that have formally supported us in recent weeks such as the National Amateur Soccer Association, the NSL Clubs and many of the State Federations.

NICK GREINER
President
IAN R. G. KNOP
Chairman
GRAEME BOWKER
Commissioner

WHERE TO NOW?

Comment
Mark Stavroulakis

The writing was on the wall for former SA members Ian Knop, Nick Greiner, Graeme Bowker and Alan Vessey that their tenures at SA would come to an abrupt end.

After the Annual General Meeting held on the 26 October whereby stakeholders elected a new board of directors, it was evident that the new crew didn't see eye to eye with Knop and co namely Dominic Galati, Paul Afkos, Les Avory and Bill Walker.

An example was quite clear of this when current IEC Managing Director Dominic Galati was chosen

as one of SA's new directors.

There was once a time that IEC were ready to end Soccer Australia's reign as soccer's governing body here in Australia however Galati was reluctant to do this as he didn't want to be known as the man that killed soccer.

It was reported in the media that SA owed IEC money over promotional games played against the Socceroos however no revenue was seen.

Having had a person who one day was ready to end it all for SA only to later become a new director for the code summed up the uncertainty chairman Ian Knop faced.

The question must be asked as to what exactly

did Soccer Australia President Nick Greiner do for the sport?

During his time at SA, Greiner took the step of being non-exposed to the soccer world; many Australian soccer followers were baffled as to whether he was still SA President.

Through his 15 or so months as President reforming the game and helping the National League succeed in Australia was his main aim.

Alas, 19 months down the track and the game is currently running without a major sponsor nor is there any positive news of the game reaching a television station.

Many soccer observers have seen the game catapult even further away from its main aim in trying to be one of the top sports in this country.

Soccer Australia has now appointed Les Avory as acting chairman until further notice however Messrs Nogarotto and Afkos have been tipped as being the next front man for SA.

The big money question is now that Ian Knop has resigned as chairman; can the sport move on? - Will the game improve with new leadership or will it continue to suffer as it has in the past with the political stranglehold that has for so long crippled this wonderful sport?

Rest assured these next few weeks will see the stance the new Soccer Australia board will take in moving the game from the shackles of what it has been in the past to hopefully a more prominent and fruitful future - here's hoping.



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National League Round 11 Reports



Perth Glory

1



Adelaide City Force

0

By Richard Kreider

Perth Glory kept in touch with league leaders Olympic Sharks thanks to a late winner against a young and vibrant Adelaide City Force at Perth Oval last Sunday and in doing so placed a handy four-point cushion between them and the other top-six challengers; a cushion that shows every indication of remaining right up until finals time.

Despite the code enduring a week of administrative turmoil, the players of both sides responded by doing what they do best and turned on an extremely entertaining and end-to-end encounter that was always going to be decided by either the slenderest of margins or a share of the spoils.

The crowd however, still reflected the feelings of those disenchanted by current events with only 9,687 turning up – the lowest ever at Perth Oval to watch a

game between these two sides and the seventh lowest overall since the club began in 1996.

"Adelaide lived up to their reputation of being the dark horses in the competition," said Glory boss Mich d'Avray. "They gave us a hard time and the blustery conditions made it difficult for the players to control the ball. As a result our game wasn't as fluent as we have been over the last four weeks or so. But having said that, I am very pleased with the three points," he said.

For Adelaide though, the defeat would have been a bitter pill to swallow after making Glory work hard for the whole ninety minutes and were close to earning a deserved draw.

"We played well for eighty minutes, then Perth Glory gets half a chance and we lose the game," said an understandably disappointed Adelaide coach Charley Villani.

It was, however, the perfect

result for Glory 'keeper Jason Petkovic, who celebrated his 250th NSL appearance by keeping a clean sheet against his former club.

Glory's other ex-Adelaide players, Damian Mori and Brad Hassell weren't as sharp as they would have liked to have been simply because they were not allowed to be.

Adelaide's midfield creator Aurelio Vidmar was also at his productive best alongside the evergreen Carl Veart. Adriano Pellegrino played a brilliant game to justifiably earn his place in the U20 squad for the up and coming Oceania World Youth Championship Qualifying tournament in Vanuatu.

Force forward Claudio Pelosi proved to be a thorn in the home defence, particularly in the opening term. His superb right-side centre to the head of Vidmar following a wonderful sweeping move involving Diego Pellegrino

in just the fourth minute, should have put the visitors in front had the ball not grazed the wrong side of the upright.

Two minutes later, Glory retaliated with a forceful header from Mori off a Scott Miller corner that was breathtaking palmed away by goalkeeper David Scarsella, who was making only his second NSL appearance.

The crowd was then given a change in half-time 'entertainment', with the first wedding ceremony, which took place inside the centre-circle. Glaswegian Tony Chorley was dressed in the flower of Scotland kilt, while his bride Danielle Taylor was given away by the Glory Gorilla.

As the wedding party left for the International Room reception, the groom decides to lift the back of his kilt to reveal to the main stand what he was wearing underneath – nothing.

The Glory came out for the second-half in a more determined frame of mind and came close to breaking the deadlock a minute from the restart but a deep right-side Faria cross was lost in the sun by both Mori and Hassell.

With almost an hours play on the clock, Mori should have put



Perth Glory's Nick Mrdja scored his side's only goal against the Adelaide City Force that gave them the all-important three points.

another Faria pass away, but directed a free-header well above the target.

Adelaide's best chance for the half fell to Veart nine minutes before the end from a well-struck 35 metre strike that whistled centimetres above Petkovic's cross-bar.

Three minutes later, Glory finally broke the deadlock from a diagonal ball from Edgar off the right, that picked out a deeply positioned Nick Mrdja, who replaced Despotovski thirteen minutes earlier.

With his back originally to the goal, the tall forward managed to swivel and place enough impetus on the ball to beat Scarsella and find the far reaches of the goal.

Mrdja had an opportunity to net a second in stoppage time but didn't get enough contact with his head to a Mori centre.

Next week Glory play away to Melbourne Knights without defender David Tarka, who has left for Vanuatu with Pellegrino. With Jamie Harnwell still a couple of weeks away from full fitness, d'Avray has a defensive dilemma that might be solved with Jamie Coyne being called into the side.



Northern Spirit

2



Melbourne Knights

1

By Stuart Jones

Northern Spirit defeated the Melbourne Knights 2-1 on Friday night at North Sydney Oval thanks to goals from youngsters Adam Kwasnik and Jonathan Richter in front of a very small crowd (one of the smallest ever in the history of the NSL).

Northern Spirit started well but perhaps the best early chance fell to the Knights Nick Sabljak whose shot went just wide of the post. The Knights had a couple of other strong possession plays in the opening ten minutes but they led to nothing with Ian Ferguson doing especially well to cut out the danger.

In the 11th minute Vuko Tomasevic put in a cross from the left which was headed down by John Hutchison. Adam Kwasnik was one on one with the keeper but could not control the ball close enough to himself and the shot was weak and straight to Martin John, the Knights custodian.

A minute later Noel Spencer played a one two with Hutchison only to be cut out by Roddy Vargas. Vargas cleared but it fell to it came back to the Spirit. Tomasevic put another cross in from the left and this time Kwasnik put his effort on target and although John got a big hand to the ball it still managed to loop into the back of the net. It was a nicely timed run from Kwasnik and he finally scored his first goal for the Spirit.

A few minutes the Knights might have had a good chance but Anthony Pelikan chose to shoot

from 30 metres rather than to play it to two players in space ahead of him. Then Spirit had a chance to go further ahead.

A great pass from Ferguson went through to Kwasnik who maybe should have shot but instead played it back into the centre only for it to be half cleared by the Knights defence. The ball landed at the feet of Tomasevic who fired his shot just wide of the post. In the 34th minute John Martin seemed to push Adam Kwasnik over in the area but Brett Hugo denied the penalty claims.



Spirit's Australian U20 representative Jonathan Richter shown scoring his side's winning goal against the Melbourne Knights last week.

A minute later a McDermott free kick from left was headed down at the far post by Julian Watts but he headed it just wide. For the last ten minutes of the half it seemed the Knights had most of the ball and chances but they could not turn these into goals and indeed the last shot on goal of the half fell to Ferguson who volleyed straight in Martin John's hands.

After the break Ferguson put a great pass through to Jonathan Richter on right who shot at a tough angle but on target which was just cleared by the Knights. Noel

Spencer was playing very well cutting out the Knights attacks in midfield and turning defence into attack.

One of these attacks saw Kwasnik run free but he goes wide and pulls up and fires when a pass to his support seemed more appropriate.

A minute later Isyan Erdogan crossed to Adrian Cervinski who dived low and effort went between the Spirit defence and just went wide of the goal, having beaten Paul Henderson and his Spirit team mates.

The Knights were gaining the lion's share of possession but were only shooting from long distance as evidenced by Leon Buhic's 54th minute effort which went straight to Paul Henderson. Lubo Lapsansky had a free kick in what looked to be just his area but his effort went over the bar. Substitute Gustavo Biscayzacu shot from distance a minute after coming on but to little affect.

In the 69th minute Ferguson played it to Kwasnik who ran down the right and played a one two with Richter who then saw it come back to him in the centre. Richter waited for John to advance towards him and then slid the ball under him and into the back of the net.

In the 72nd and 77th minutes Kwasnik put the ball in the back of the net only to be adjudged offside on both occasions. Then in the 85th minute Lubo Lapsansky seemed to fell Hutchison in the area but nothing came of it. Coming into the final five minutes and Spirit were looking to their first clean sheet of the season but it was not to be. In the 88th minute referee Brett Hugo awarded the Knights a free kick on the edge of the Spirit area after he said Alex Tobin had handled the ball and Hugo Biscayzacu scored straight from the free kick leaving Paul Henderson standing.



Newcastle United

3



Brisbane Strikers

3

By Pano Tagaroulas

A poor crowd of 2003 spectators endured rainy conditions to witness an exciting finish as Newcastle United and the Brisbane Strikers played out a six-goal thriller.

The opening exchanges between the two sides failed to produce any goalmouth action with the game's first chance coming in the 12th minute. Andy Roberts floated a cross in towards Esala Masi from the left flank. The cross was only cleared to the edge of the Strikers box. Masi gathered the ball, moved it to his right and drove a low shot into the bottom left corner to give the Novocastrians a 1-0 lead.



Brisbane Strikers substitute Lawrence Drake notched up his side's second goal of the game that ended three-a-piece against Newcastle.

wall which was followed by a second attempt this time deflected for a corner. The 300 game veteran took the set piece finding Anthony Roche whose 6 yard header found the back of the net, halving Newcastle's lead.

The 59th minute saw Jonathan McKay float a ball wide on the left for McKay, from inside Brisbane's defensive third. Anthony Roche ran back from a passive offside position and allowed McKay to collect the ball and deliver a cross into the penalty area. The ball narrowly missed the head of Roche and an unmarked Lawrence Drake was left on the far post to drive the ball into the bottom left corner, levelling the score at 2-2.

On 79 McKay stole the ball off Robbie Middleby on the left side and played an early pass into the box, which was latched onto by Anthony Roche. The Brisbane striker took a touch to the left past a despairing Beltrame before slotting the ball into the net to complete Brisbane's comeback.

No less than 60 seconds later Newcastle were on the attack with a Joel Griffiths ball into the penalty area finding Masi. The Fijian international fired his shot at Brisbane custodian Jason Kearton and a scramble for possession eventuated.

The ball fell kindly for Ryan Griffiths on the six-yard box, however his turn and shot was hit straight into a scrambling Kearton. Joel Griffiths stole the limelight when he gained control of the ball and drove a low shot into the bottom left corner making the score 3-3.

In the first minute of injury time Daniel Beltrame's kick upfield found the head of Esala Masi who flicked the ball on into the box. Ryan Griffiths received the ball and blasted a golden opportunity to win the game over the bar from just outside the six-yard box.

National League Round 11 Reports

	South Melbourne	1
	Parramatta Power	0

By Alan Clark

A last-minute goal from New Zealand international Vaughan Coveny gave South the win over Parramatta Power at Bob Jane Stadium last Sunday evening, breaking the heart of Power coach Nick Theodorakopoulos who thought his team was the better.

Coveny had bundled the ball over the line after a deep cross from the left from Vince Lia was headed down by Michael Baird.

"We came (here) looking for three points," said Theodorakopoulos. "We never got any. If it was a boxing match we would have been a few points ahead."

The Power coach had regularly bested South when coach at Wollongong, and it looked as if he would do so again, until striker John Buonavoglia drew his second yellow card late in the game and was dismissed. The diminutive front-man was carded early in the first half

apparently for diving, and seemed to be penalised again for the same offence six minutes from time.

"You guys saw it - I'd like you to mention what you see," he said. "If that was a dubious decision, you can comment on it."

South coach Danny Wright said his side was second-best until the dismissal, and then seemed to start to play.

"Our confidence wasn't there as it normally is," said Wright. "The big turning point was the send-off. For some reason the players lifted, and we started playing a bit more."

Despite the win, and South's third in a row after a faltering start to the campaign, it hid some structural deficiencies in the side, according to Wright. "I'll have to go back to basics, I think," he said. "We're not doing the basics well enough at the moment. Parramatta was quicker to the ball, and our natural passing game and movement wasn't there."

"Things broke down in the middle of the park," Wright said.

South's preparation was disrupted when Wright was compelled to make an early change. Bill Damianos had pulled a hamstring after just ten minutes of the game, Paul Trimboli came on as his replacement.

The first-half was a disjointed affair, with both sides turning the ball over at rates that would have caused both coaches to despair.

Peter Buljan and Baird made a return to the



Michael Beauchamp (Centre) shown powering away from South players Mehmet Durakovic (Left) and Peter Buljan (Right).

South formation after a two-week absence as a result of suspensions and had combined as early as the tenth minute to break the Power offside trap onto a through-ball.

Power keeper Liam Reddy spotted the potential though, and just beat the pair by rushing off his line to clear. Just after the quarter-hour Brendan Renaud loosed a left-foot thunderbolt from 30 metres after the ball broke his way, but South keeper Eugene Galekovic managed to hold on even though it came through a mass of players on its way.

Midway through the half, Coveny raced down the right onto a through-ball, reaching the bye-line before cutting back onto his left foot and sending a shot from the edge of the area crashing off the far-post, with Reddy beaten.

But there was little to enthuse about in the opening half, and it seemed the second-half would continue the pattern. However, the game burst into life just after the hour when both sides created more chances in a ten minute period than in the entire game to that point.

Kosta Salapasadis commenced the flurry with a right-foot shot from the point of the area forcing Galekovic into a full-stretch diving save. Ahmad Elrich then made space down the right and cut-back a dangerous ball into the path of Brad Maloney clear on the penalty-spot. Inexplicably, Maloney had an air shot and the

chance evaporated.

Baird immediately had a good opportunity with a close-in shot following a nod-on by Buljan inside the area, but Reddy was down smartly to block, then gather on the line.

Power then mounted its best effort when Alvin Ceccoli made an impressive charge from half-way, setting up Renaud at the edge of the area for Renaud to smash a shot off the post with Galekovic grasping air.

Before anyone could gather breath, Lia launched a deep cross from the left which fell to Coveny at the far-post, but Reddy again made a fine save. Wayne O'Sullivan then attempted to lob Galekovic from 25 metres but the ball carried narrowly over the bar. It seemed likely that it would be Power to break the deadlock.

"I was very happy with our central-midfield," said Theodorakopoulos. "I thought the game was going to be won or lost (there). A bit of (South) good luck and some fine goalkeeping prevented us from pulling off a sound victory."

But it was the combination of Lia crossing from the left to the far-post in the game's final minutes which brought the goal. Baird out-jumped the defenders at the far-post and Coveny bundled it over the line from directly in front after Reddy had managed a block.

	Sydney United	2
	Marconi Stallions	0

NEWLY-MARRIED Sydney United midfielder Ante Deur made life a misery for Marconi when he featured each time in an error ridden NSW match at Sydney United Sports Centre last Sunday afternoon.

The 22-year-old, in his second season with the club, set up the move which led to the opening goal by Brendon Santalab 10 minutes before halftime and then scored midway through the second session.

Although Sydney United took the points they did not play well but Marconi played

worse in a match where both teams were guilty of poor passing where the ball more often than not went to the opposition.

"We were flat and a number of the players were at Ante's wedding last Friday. It wasn't a pretty game," United coach Branko Culina said.

Marconi coach Raul Blanco added that his players needed to have a good look at themselves after giving the ball away so often.

However both Culina and Blanco agreed the match - previously a fierce local derby - lacked passion.

"The game in Australia is not about players any longer but about political people," said Blanco.

And Culina added: "Australia is the only country in the world where national directors were better known than the players."

As the comedy of errors on the field earned the ire of the crowd, Deur brought shouts of approval when he barged into the Marconi penalty area only to be brought down by defender Dominic Longo.

Referee Eddie Lennie immediately pointed to the spot and Santalab sent keeper Michael Turnbull diving the wrong way.



The second goal came from quick thinking from Deur who followed through when Turnbull could only parry a strong 25 metre drive by Santalab and was in position to tap the ball in from a few metres.

Sydney United earned the first half lead with a more consistent attack despite their mistakes and keeper Vanja Ivesa had a lazy half.

Deur was the first player to test either keeper when his 17th minute run beat three Marconi defenders and his angled shot from inside the area hit the upright and bounced back.

Angelo Costanzo was the stand out player for Marconi and although Tony Pecinich and Alex Brosque tried hard to lead Marconi they were capably held by the United backline.

"All of the players looked short of a gallop. The penalty gave us a lift but we've played better in the past and got nothing," Culina said.

	Olympic Sharks	3
	Wollongong Wolves	0

By Peter Damalas

With the seagulls hovering over the playing field in the picturesque setting of Toyota Park in Cronulla, defending champions the Olympic Sharks continued their push for the minor premiership with a comprehensive 3-0 victory over Wollongong Wolves.

Goals from Ante Milicic in the first half, and Andrew Durante and Joel Porter, settled the match for the Sharks in a performance which relied on making the most of limited opportunities.

For long periods of the match, the home team worked on putting numerous passes together without exerting serious pressure.

Ron Corry's Wolves did quite well in the first half to contain the young Sharks, and kept most of the play in opposition territory.

After an uncertain start during which Olympic won a corner in the first 30 seconds, Wollongong settled into a rhythm and began to dictate proceedings.

The room given to the likes of Dino Mennillo and Daniel Aliffi by a relaxed Olympic midfield assisted the away team.

The first major incident of the match occurred in the 14th minute. Taking the ball on the left from the corner of the penalty box, Mennillo chipped a cross in and to the surprise of all and sundry, clipped the upright after both Ante Juric and goalkeeper Clint Bolton let the ball pass through.

From an ensuing cross, skipper Stuart Young headed over the bar.

However, the former NSL Champions failed to cause much damage in the penalty box, as both strikers Young, and Naum Sekulovski were shepherded away from goal by

a resolute Olympic defence.

The south coast outfit boast the equal lowest record for goals scored so far this season, with an average of under a goal per game, and look set to struggle. The front pairing have been dropping deep in order to receive service and create chances, at the expense

On 40 minutes, a run and switch pass from Andrew Packer released Milicic who chipped the advancing 'keeper Andrew Crews to finish in the top corner and make the half-time score 1-0.

The goalscorer was replaced by Greg Owens. Olympic Sharks effectively



Ante Juric shown flooring Wolves midfielder Dino Mennillo during last week's fixture that saw the Sharks ease past Wollongong three-nil.

of presence in the penalty area.

For the home team, Tom Pondeljak showed glimpses of brilliance in the first half with a number of impressive runs. Ron Corry's three-man midfield were often engaged in double-teaming the 26-year old.

Star striker Ante Milicic, absent from most of Olympic's attacks in the first half-hour, was involved in two incidents which preceded the opening goal. After setting up fellow strike partner and last week's hero, Jeromy Harris, the Number 9 was embroiled in a penalty appeal which was turned down.

sealed the game eight minutes into the second period with a tremendous strike from young defender Andrew Durante.

Following a splendid square ball from Harris, Durante set his sights for the top corner before unleashing a 25 metre drive which sailed pass a hapless Crews.

The match began petering out after this event, as the Wolves threatened little and Olympic were content to conserve their 'big-match' plays.

The closest opportunity for Wollongong came courtesy of an unlikely source.

As defender Paul Kohler played a back pass, the ball

took a wicked bounce and almost ended up in the back of the net before Bolton cleaned up.

A shot by half-time substitute Sean Babic from an acute angle attempted to catch Bolton off guard, when Stuart Young had taken up a better position in the centre.

New recruit Joel Porter made the final score 3-0 deep into stoppage time (93rd minute) with a classy left-footed free kick which floated around the wall and into the bottom corner of the net.



Sydney United's man of the week Ante Deur played a vital role in his side's two-nil win over rivals the Marconi Stallions last week.

VICTORIAN CHRONICLES



By Brendon Davis

Seventeen Referees

Soccer matches throw up odd statistics from time to time. But one of the odder comes from the South Melbourne -v- Melbourne Knights match at Bob Jane last week where the car park operator recorded seventeen different Soccer Australia referees passes used for access to the car park and stadium.

Enquiries from ABSW found there were four appointed referees – the other thirteen attended Bob Jane of their own accord, using their passes to save on car parking and admission costs.

Readers will recall both clubs were disappointed with the standard of the refereeing so maybe one of them should have brought his kit with him.

PFA Model Superseded

With the PFA's model for the NSL under fire on all fronts, one of the worlds most critical soccer meetings received no coverage in Australia.

In Brussels last week the G14 met – the 14 most powerful European Football Clubs headed Manchester United and Real Madrid. Their meeting was to address the "soaring and unsustainable" cost of player wages.

They announced they have struck a deal where wages will be capped to 70% or less of turnover, with an effort to link pay to performance; by negotiating pay cuts where a team loses its place in the most lucrative league (ie:UEFA).

Player costs are 125% of turnover for Italian Clubs, 85% in Spain and 75% in England the meeting was told. This is obviously unsustainable with the example of Fiorentina who was recently declared bankrupt used as a case study.

Manchester United CEO Peter Kenyon

told the meeting many other teams are struggling financially and are "technically bust". The collapse and reduction in revenue from TV and pay TV was cited as a major cause as were a variety of other factors with the meeting concerned revenue will be further eroded when TV rights next expire. Several EPL Clubs, including Manchester are expected to try to break away from the collective agreement to negotiate their own "deals" with the networks, to the detriment of the other clubs.

While the resolutions emanating from the G14 meeting represent prudent management, there are no enforcement sanctions so the clubs, who remain bitter rivals will likely ignore the agreement where short-term advantage may be available. In fact two such members are already in dispute – Real



Australian whistle blower
Simon Micallef.

Madrid have been accused by Inter Milan on falling behind on the AUD \$95m Ronaldo transfer.

Too Many Fixture Clashes

Last Sunday both Victorian Clubs hosted significant matches, both were home games, both kicked off at the same time.

As both matches were clashes between traditional rivals, many fans and the media were forced to miss one of the matches. With so many weekends with neither Victorian Club playing at home, it's a shame

our authorities can't pay better attention to the fixture to avoid these clashes.

The additional press coverage alone justifies warrants better structuring but clearly there is an increasing number of neutrals attending Victorian NSL matches.

And fixturing three consecutive South home matches – and subsequently three consecutive away matches later in the season is unwise in the extreme, this will certainly impact adversely on attendances at the lakeside stadium.

Strong Victorian Crowds

Both the Knights and South are enjoying a healthy resurgence in people through the turnstiles

While the national crowds have been poor, almost 10,000 fans attended the Victorian matches last week with the derby game the week prior attracting over 10,000 fans to Bob Jane Stadium for an action packed match.

At Sunshine, the Knights are attracting widespread interest, partly due to the fine performance of the team and partly fans wanting to see the exciting import Gustavo Biscayzacv who'll come off the substitute bench for the second time this week.

Its All In The name

Talking to a new Australian of Asian descent at Bob Jane on Sunday night. This twenty something fan was proudly decked out in his new South shirt with the sponsors logo in check and team scarf (despite the heat).

Waiting in the food queue at half time, I asked him who his favourite player was to which he quickly responded Lia. Obviously not satisfied with my response he told me "not really" then pointed to Bill Damjanos' name in the program telling me "hard name – best player, but Lia maybe good Chinese name".

Simon Micallef

Referees have been subject to ample criticism again this season so its great when you can praise the man in the middle.

After the South - Marconi game both coaches commented favourably on the performance of Micallef, a rarity in itself.

Then players from both teams were talking and joking with the referees after their showers, with one of the referees assistants seen, showered, deep in discussion explaining certain rules to a group of genuinely interested players from both clubs.

Kisnorbo Out – Susa In

As South secure the long anticipated return of Susa, they are likely to be without Defender Patrick Kisnorbo who is likely to be offered further European trials come the opening of the January transfer window.

South will also face the critical December matches without their young dynamos Vince Lia, Michael Baird and Massimo Mordocca who will be travelling with Australia's national youth team under coach Ange Postecoglou.

When we thought we'd hit the bottom during the darkest days of the Labozetta reign we didn't know how wrong we were.

Ian Knops decision to resign before being thrown out of office capped a torrid week for our NSL. Nick Greiner also resigned as Chairman and, CEO Alan Vessey gave 4 weeks notice as required under his contract so was told to vacate immediately with Stefan Kamasz taking charge temporarily.

Earlier in the week, Parramatta Power finally confirmed one of the NSL's worst kept secrets, they will leave the NSL, then they proceeded to blame everyone else apart from themselves for their inability to capture the hearts and wallets of the fans in the western suburbs of Sydney.

Flamboyant South Australian Bob D'Ottavi then offered the Adelaide City Force for sale, with a price tag of only \$1,000,000. Any purchaser will then have to pay a further \$250,000 fee to the NSL as well as cover the Forces significant trading losses.

Alas it doesn't stop there – the most disappointing announcement of the week comes from Perth where the Glory have closed down their Youth team, citing the annual cost of \$250,000 as being an unacceptable expense. For a self-titled "big club" this is a retrograde step, with the real big clubs across Europe investing increasing sums in their academy and youth infrastructure.

Then our corporate regulator the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) has questioned Soccer Australia over its solvency following claims SA may soon run out of money resulting in the Australian Sports Commission withholding \$300,000 in funding.

And the PFA reform model has come under fire from all quarters – and its not even been publicly released. So concerned

is Union boss Schwab that his lawyers dispatched heavy handed letters to NSL officials that had seen the model threatening litigation by the PFA if details were publicised.

Australian keeper Mark Schwarzer quickly distanced himself from a mooted involvement in the plan despite claims from PFA associates to the contrary.

The Unions research money came from the NSL Clubs so the full report must be released unequivocally to the Clubs. You see, the PFA demanded and received a percentage of revenue from the sale of NSL club assets. Imagine a factory union getting a percentage of sales under an industrial EBA.

The collective bargaining agreement got through because clubs management collectively were too weak or incapable of standing up for their rights. It was easier to concede, with the Union creaming over \$1,500,000 from transfer revenue that should have gone to the NSL clubs who are all financially strapped.

So with the clubs funding the research its only fair they receive the benefit of it. One club official told ABSW this week "all Schwab wants is to land the top job in the APL and get his \$300,000 to 400,000 a year salary".

While this is likely an extreme reaction its clear the PFA have taken advantage of the weak management at Club and SA level, trying to hijack reform debate advocating their model as being the sole salvation for Australian soccer. Already components of the model have been dismissed by various sections of the soccer community as being unworkable. Yesterday South coach Danny Wright revealed further flaws with the PFA model.

Across town, officials in Victorian were quick to emphasise the "new" NSL clubs, such as Carlton, Northern Spirit and Parramatta all followed a similar path into obliteration – they thought success was easy – you just bought it! All you had to do was spend, and spend freely on players.

This had the obvious flow on effect, it forced player wages up to unsustainable levels resulting in these new clubs failing and the high priced players ultimately unemployed, or not as professional footballers. Of course, the club management blame everyone else, Soccer Australia, Channel 7, the media of the fans. Oddly their own management remains unquestioned.

On the park we've witnessed some ter-



Vince Lia: South
Melbourne's young rising
star

rific football. We've had 2 great matches at Bob Jane where large crowds enjoyed 16 goals over the 2 games when Olympic and the Knights visited Lakeside. We had a wonderful Grand-Final replay and a cliffhanger at Sunshine where Knights scored an exciting win over Sydney United after introducing another international in Biscayzacv.

All the politics and mismanagement has overshadowed the on-field excitement.

Over the next few weeks we'll hear of the other misdemeanours involving Ian Knop which will probably include details of his expending SA monies on legal costs involved in retaining his post. Mr Schwab will probably release other parts of the model while seeking to reclaim the intellectual high ground.

We have a golden opportunity to reform our league, reform our governing body and genuinely achieve positive results. But it needs three things, all of which seem beyond our administrators; we need public unity, we need to sacrifice personal interests for whatever is best for the code and we need all our celebrity administrators appreciating it's the football that should be in the newspapers not their politics.

Hopefully our pessimism is misplaced and we've underestimated our new administrators.

Future Glory Withdrawn

Perth Glory has decided to withdraw Future Glory FC from the State League competition citing uncertainty over the game's future on the national level and a lack of support from some State League clubs in WA.

"Political uncertainty with Soccer Australia and the NSL has created an unstable framework discouraging investment for the future," said Perth Glory Chief Executive Officer Jeff Dennis.

"We have also experienced difficulties with a lack of public endorsement of

Future Glory from some Soccer West Coast clubs," Mr Dennis added.

"Perth Glory acknowledges and thanks the SWC Board for their vision and united support of Perth Glory's youth development model, but unfortunately some clubs don't share this vision and commitment for the good of the game.

"Uncertainty over the future of the NSL has made it difficult for the club to secure corporate support for the program over the long-term.

This decision underlines the desperate

need for reform of a national competition in which all clubs are struggling financially.

"Unless this situation changes, the game will continue to stumble along impoverished. It will struggle financially and remain funded from the bottom up."

Perth Glory remains committed to the Future Glory programme for 11 to 14 year olds, which has seen over 200 Western Australian youngsters receive top class weekly skills coaching.

HOLMAN OUT – PELLIGRINO IN

National Under 20 coach Ange Postecoglou has been forced to make a change to his squad that will compete in the Oceania World Youth Championship Qualifying tournament in December.

Netherlands based striker Brett Holman has declined the opportunity to join the squad for the qualifying tournament in Vanuatu, preferring instead to remain with his club side Excelsior, where he is on loan from Feyenoord.

Holman has been in terrific form of late with Excelsior where the ever-ready striker has starred in almost every match for the Dutch club mostly coming off the bench.

Reports from Holland have indicated that the former Parramatta Power striker is one for the future and will re-join Dutch giants Feyenoord after his loan spell at sister club Excelsior.

Postecoglou has indicated that, should Australia qualify for the 2003 FIFA Under 20 World Youth Championship in the United Arab Emirates, he would not con-

sider any player for selection that had not made themselves available for the qualifying tournament.

Postecoglou has named Adelaide City striker 18-year-old Adriano Pelligrino as a replacement for Holman. Pelligrino was part of the Austral U20 squad that took part in this years Festival Cup held in Adelaide.

"Adriano was one of several players that narrowly missed selection for the initial squad and he will be a more than adequate replacement," said Postecoglou.

Pelligrino will join the squad for the pre-tournament camp when it assembles in Melbourne on Sunday, with the squad departing for Vanuatu on Wednesday 4 December.

The Young Socceroos will play only two matches in their qualifying group (Group A) due to the late withdrawal of the Cook Islands.

The fixtures are: Saturday December 7 Vanuatu Vs Australia - 2.30pm Monday December 9 Australia Vs Papua New Guinea - 2.30pm.

The winner of Group A will play-off against the winner of Group B, which comprises Fiji, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga.

Should Australia progress from its group, playoff matches are scheduled for Thursday December 19 (away match) and Sunday December 22 in Melbourne.

The winner of the playoff shall represent Oceania at the FIFA World Youth Championship to be held in the United Arab Emirates from 25 March - 16 April 2003.



Brett Holman will not
be making the trek
from Holland to play
for the U20's in
December.

Emerton warns England

Socceroo Brett Emerton has a message for Sven-Goran Eriksson ahead of Australia's clash with England at Upton Park in February, declaring: "We have what it takes to beat them."

The versatile Feyenoord midfielder, who has been strongly linked with Newcastle and Leeds, insisted Australia have the belief to defeat the World Cup quarter-finalists.

"We are going there to win," Emerton told Sydney newspaper The Daily Telegraph.

"We have the players to do it, the self-belief and the ability."

Australia, ranked 47th in the world, have qualified for just one World Cup, back in 1974, and the nation has endured a host of agonising exits in qualifiers ever since, including losing to Uruguay in the last hurdle before Japan and South Korea 2002.

Emerton sees the February friendly as an opportunity to prove the country's football credentials and give the sport a welcome boost back home.

"We know what it would mean to the game's image back home to win and we'll be taking this friendly very seriously," he said.

"I'm sure England will too. After the disappointment of missing out on the last World Cup it's a chance for us to prove something."

"England are a great team but that won't worry us at all."

"We have a good mix of young players coming through like Lucas Neil (Blackburn Rovers) and Marco Bresciano (Parma), Vince Grella (Empoli) and some experienced ones also."

"It will be a great indication of where



Brett Emerton is ready for the
English challenge in February.

we're at and where we're going.

A few people might be quite surprised if they haven't seen us play before how well we perform."

Leeds pair Mark Viduka and Harry Kewell are likely to play, with Rangers' Craig Moore and Middlesbrough's Tony Vidmar among a host of European-based Australians sure to come into coach Frank Farina's reckoning.

Emerton has made his desire to join Kewell and Viduka in the Premiership clear, with Newcastle tipped to edge out Leeds with a move for him when the transfer window reopens in January.

"I love the way the game is played in England, the way it flows and the fact you are encouraged to take players on," he said.

"That's my game."



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Gold Coast Continue Fine Form

by Paul Schiavo

Round Four of the Super Summer League saw Gold Coast win the battle of the top two sides at Lion's Stadium, while hat-tricks were the order of the day at the remaining fixtures.

Qld Lions3
Gold Coast . . . HT (2-3) 4

The match of the round saw Qld Lions entertaining Gold Coast at Richlands Stadium. The game had the makings of a beauty and it lived up to the billing.

Lions, smarting from their loss to the Sunshine Coast, faced a Gold Coast team that should have captured all three points against Rochedale last and were looking to get things right this time. The Coast knew it wouldn't be easy especially on Lion's home ground where very few teams come away with anything.

Lions fielded a very experienced line up and included a number of players with First Team experience such as Danny Flaskas, Danny Wilson (ex QAS), Shaman Lee and Cody Lovell (sub). The Coast fielded almost the same side that took the park last week.

Last week, the Coast were almost destined not to score, through poor finishing and a bit of bad luck. After only ONE minute you could sense that this might be their night. A long cross came in from the right and it looked for all money to be Griffin McMaster's ball in the Lion's goal. Even though McMaster rose well to meet the ball, it somehow spilled from his grasp and fell to Aaron McGuinness on the left who from 10 metres struck the ball into an empty net.

Lions0
Gold Coast1

At least Lions had 89 minutes to get themselves into the match.

Lions were stung into action and a few minutes later a neat one-two between Terry Hughes and Chris Di Sipio on the edge of the Coast's penalty area saw Di Sipio's shot go just wide.

This was a taste of things to come for in the 10th minute Lions were awarded a penalty, again from a

one-two, this time between Damien Volkens and Di Sipio which saw Volkens up-ended in the box. Up stepped Danny Flaskas to convert to make the score Qld Lions 1 Gold Coast 1.

Up until the Lion's equalizer, both sides had been guilty of giving the ball away far too easily and this had led to the game being dominated by the midfielders, with neither side having any real scoring chances.

Now the Lions had their tails up and they started to dominate. Five minutes later they were to take the lead.

Damien Volkens won a decisive tackle inside the Coast half. He then sent a through ball to Chris Di Sipio and with the Coast defenders appealing for off-side, Di Sipio calmly placed the ball to the left of a stranded Mark Conrad.

Qld Lions2
Gold Coast1

In the 19th minute Danny Flaskas went on a surging run on the right after receiving the ball on half way. He found Terry Hughes on the corner of the 18 yd box who was fouled. From the resulting free kick, the ball found its way to that man Di Sipio again who shot just wide.

Just when you thought that Lions were going to take a real strangle-hold on the match an error was to prove costly.

In the 20th minute, the Coast knocked a seemingly harmless long ball into the Lion's area. Again McMaster looked as though he was in control but mistimed his punch. The ball was headed by Luke Sleight over McMaster and defender Shaman Lee, under the cross-bar to level the game up once again.

Qld Lions2
Gold Coast2

Lions had the greater share of possession up till the Coast's equalizer but were made to pay dearly for two costly errors by the normally reliable Griffin McMaster.

The game reverted to a midfield battle once again with neither side gaining the ascendancy.

Then in the 32nd minute another error by the Lions defence led to a penalty for the Coast.

QLD SUPER SUMMER LEAGUE NEXT WEEK FIXTURES

All Games Kick-Off at 7.00pm

SATURDAY DECEMBER 7
SUNSHINE COAST

VS

ROCHEDALE ROVERS
Maroochydore Road, Kuluin QLD

GOLD COAST CITY

VS

SOCCER FAR NORTH COAST
Mallawa Drive Sports Complex, Palm Beach QLD

QUEENSLAND LIONS

VS

TOOWOOMBA RAIDERS
Lions Stadium, Richlands QLD

FARINA KEEPS THE PEACE

National team coach Frank Farina has stepped in to quell the rift between Leeds United duo Mark Viduka and Harry Kewell, which threatens to tear apart the Socceroos.

"Whenever we've had Harry and Mark in camp together there's never been a problem between them," Farina told The Daily Telegraph.

"I'm quite relaxed about Mark coming out and saying things as long as he and Harry work things out between themselves. I'd pick them both for the national team without hesitation."

The drama arose after Viduka told a Sunday newspaper that he had hardly spoken to his Elland Road teammate over the past two years.

The 26-year-old is also upset because he believes that Kewell's manager Bernie Mandic - Viduka's former advisor - was pushing his client's claims for the captaincy of the Socceroos.

However, Farina is adamant that the matter is a "storm in a tea cup".

"You get varying personalities in football and that's what makes the dynamics of a team. I'd hate to be in charge of a team of clones, it wouldn't work," Farina continued.

"I've had problems with teammates myself, it happens. I once had a punch-up at training up with (Socceroo teammate) Robbie Slater. We are friends and it did nothing to sour our relationship down the track.

"Players are all different. You don't expect them all to be bosom buddies the whole time. That's never the case in a contact sport where things can get heated, even during training.

"I don't think it's a case of Mark not liking Harry," Farina added.

Meanwhile, Viduka was left out of Leeds' squad

for the loss to Charlton overnight as manager Terry Venables searches for a victory to keep himself afloat at the club.

Kewell on the other hand is a permanent fixture at Elland Road despite Leeds' poor form and admitted that he could not understand Viduka's outburst.

"I've never had a problem with Mark and have no idea what he's trying to achieve by saying these things," Kewell said.

"I'm sure his comments will disappoint the fans of Leeds and Australia alike. I've always believed that a player's boots should do the talking and nothing has changed."

On the issue of Mandic's influence, Farina rubbished Viduka's assessment.

"I can reassure every player that agents will never influence my decisions," he said.

"I talk to player managers about different matters at different times. They will always push players, but I make the calls."

Farina also had some positive news for under siege Socceroos skipper Paul Okon.

"It's the same with the media. Everybody seems to have written Paul Okon off as captain of Australia because he's not playing regularly for Leeds.

"That's totally wrong. Paul's still alive and well in my book and very much in my calculations. As are four or five other players.

"You don't just select somebody because you like them. I don't see it as a divisive issue within the team."

Farina concluded by saying: "I've always had the policy that there is room for quality players in the squad, even if they aren't playing regularly for their clubs."



Frank Farina: Trying to ease the tension between two of his bigger name players in Mark Viduka and Harry Kewell.

QUEENSLAND SUPER SUMMER LEAGUE

Results & Table

TOOWOOMBA RAIDERS0	SUNSHINE COAST4
QUEENSLAND LIONS3	GOLD COAST CITY4
ROCHEDALE ROVERS3	SOCCER FAR NORTH COAST . . . 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sunshine Coast	4	3	0	1	8	5	9
Gold Coast City	4	2	2	0	10	6	8
Rochedale	4	2	1	1	9	8	7
Qld Lions	4	2	0	2	14	7	6
S.F.N.C. Lismore	4	1	0	3	6	9	3
Toowoomba	4	0	1	3	3	13	1

Letters to the Editor

WELL DONE SCHWARZER

Dear Sir,
I think Mark Schwarzer is completely justified in his stance at not having an interest in the creation of an Australian Premier League.

Firstly the survival of a competition should not rely on the dozen or so export quality soccer players who have moved into the larger leagues of the world. This must be left to the relevant governing bodies who have a responsibility on behalf of the fans, players and relevant stakeholders to uphold these duties.

For such an idea to be even drafted shows a total ineptitude on the part of Soccer Australia.



Mark Schwarzer

Secondly, as Schwarzer revealed, the playing matters should be kept separate from the business matters of a soccer club. For the players to get involved would spell ultimate disaster for all those associated with the game.

But my biggest point as I have revealed is the fact that overseas Aussies were approached to fund a new ten-team competition.

For those at the top I say this, Get real and get your act together. Your mismanagement should not be passed onto other people to amend.

D Bragas,
Ermington, NSW.

KAMASZ THE DESTROYER!

Dear Sir,

It is no wonder the game of soccer is a shambles in this country. With administrators such as Stefan Kamasz at the helm worse is to come.

His pathetic performance on TWG a week ago only shows how pathetic the administrators of the game really are. He continually refused to answer questions put to him by both Craig Foster and Andrew Orsatti. As far as NSL goes 95% of soccer fans are voting with their feet.

They are not interested in the NSL AND

NEVER WILL BE. The sooner the NSL is scrapped the better for the game. Anyone who thinks that reforms will save the game is kidding themselves.

This is the third set of reforms that Kamasz and co. have presided over and will achieve nothing. Unless we get the likes of Brendon Schwab, Craig Foster on an independent commission to run the game then the game will continue to go backwards.

From the email
Harry Sevastopoulos

BOW YOUR HEADS IN SHAME SEVEN!

Dear Sir,

What is going on at Channel Seven! I saw those two comedians Roy and H.G last night bringing shame upon soccer on their Monday night program which is not very funny anyway.

Their "comedy act" about the Australian Premier League and showing some very bad footage of the NSL as comparison with England was disgraceful.

The NSL can provide some quality soccer. But we wouldn't know that because Roy and HG's network don't show any of them.

Why oh why can't SBS get the soccer back? Knop must go.

Zlatko Cricitpic,
North Sunshine, VIC
zcricitpic60@hotmail.com

NO CONFIDENCE

Dear Sir,

Let's face it, with already a quarter of the year gone the game has yet to be screened on live television here in Australia — what a disgrace.

Channel Seven should be shot. They have the world's greatest sport in their hands and they fail to market it properly what kind of buffoons are they?

I've been to almost every Northern Spirit match and even though the side hasn't gone the best, the football has been great.

I've witnessed some brilliant matches but in turn have failed to see them on the box.

At the moment I've heard that other stations such as nine, ten ABC etc are bidding for the National Soccer League.

I hope it lands into the hands of either SBS or Foxtel as both channels will push the code

in the right direction by showing the Australian soccer matches.

SBS did a great job a few years back when Andy Paschalidis, Les Murray and co were all at the helm.

C7 did its bit last season to show all the matches and no one had any problems with their coverage but with seven, well they might as well pack up shop and give it to someone that really cares because they couldn't give two hoots about this wonderful game of ours.

It's as if Channel Seven have done this purposely in order for the game to not survive. Can't wait to see the game live on a BETTER station.

Simon Patterson,
Kemps Creek, NSW.

BEST LEAGUE IN THE WORLD?

Dear Sir,

In my opinion the English Premier League would have to be the most watched and talked about football league in the world.

When people pose the question what is their best league in the world — there's no doubt that England reigns supreme.

The excitement level it has is amazing.

A team can be four-nil down and yet manage to scrape back into the match.

The Serie A I think has had its day to tell you the truth. It does have a high skill level but from a soccer supporters

view its rather dull and boring.

Every time I see an Italian match its either one-nil or nil-all.

Spanish football has picked up immensely and I think is probably the closest league that comes in comparison with the Premier League.

Soccer is an entertainment sport, I hate it when I hear people gloat about how good Rugby Union, League or Basketball is because at the end of the day there is only one sport in this world — Football.

Josh Stevenson,
Perth, WA.

PEÑAROL MAGIC

Dear Sir,

I attended the Marconi vs Penarol game on Saturday as a lover of football rather than a supporter of either team.

I would dearly love to see the game in Australia flourish and reach its potential, particularly in respect of the National League.

This game instilled a passion in Sydney's Uruguayan Community, which was fantastic, the difference in class did not stop Marconi having a few chances which was good to see.

What will stick in my mind though is the passion of the numerous Penarol fans and the overall atmosphere of the event, which far exceeded my expectations, based on previous NSL games.

I feel this is part of what is required to secure the future of the game within Australia and perhaps with the restructuring of the NSL, Penarol should be included as a member!!

Graeme Hay,
Earlwood, NSW

A TELL ALL ... OF SORTS

By Daniela Raco



Soccer is a profession that requires dedication, hunger, and emotional support. Put simply, it requires a "female".

The female accompanies the oh-so-good player to games, holds his hand at important moments, and puts her smiley face on for the sake of keeping up appearances. She is the glam (usually blond) behind the man.

It's a fulfilling, yet very dull life.

It's an emotional roller-coaster. It's a life of contracts, injuries, rehabilitation, and travel. "Home" becomes a blur. It's wherever there is a home-cooked meal.

I love the game, don't get me wrong. But, among the ranks there is the odd mix of immaturity, arrogance, cockiness, pretty boys, and even 30-year-old boys.

Each is less impressive than the other. But, I have accepted each and every one of these people for who they are. There is hope for them yet!

Of course there are exceptions. I admire the soccer-playing family man, the dedicated, the genuine, and the mature. I have met each one of these people too.

I have made life-long friends from this latter group. It takes a strong person to know where to draw that fine line.

There is also a sad side to the game. These guys feel the pressure. It's a big ask to perform at your best work-in-and-week-out. They're not robots. They have bad spells.

There are times they do doubt themselves, and their playing future. As an elite athlete this is to be expected. It's all part-and-parcel of the game.

But it's one of the biggest misconceptions about sportsmen. For all the women after the glamour and the dollars, take off those rose-coloured glasses. It's a bumpy ride.

I have a great admiration for the players that leave everyone and everything they know behind to chase their dream. For those that succeed (the very few and far between) the rewards are endless.

For those that are trying, it's a battle I don't envy. But I admire the quality of the man that packs his bags for the sake of the game.

He's overseas struggling, lonely, and with no clear future. It's hard to reach out to these people. It's a waiting game.

The Yellow Brick Road to fame and fortune is fraught with pitfalls and disappointments. It's an arduous experience. Let's hope he becomes a better man for it. Not meaning to contradict myself, I wish I was there for the ride.

The experience itself is not about riding the wave; it's knowing what it took to get them there. At the end of the day, Australian soccer — you lose out!

These guys have the passion and skill to ply their trade on home soil, but apparently the League has enough good players and can afford to lose a few here and there. Figure that one out!

Thanks for letting me have my gripe...but watch out soccer people, I'm just getting started!!

NEW DIRECTION

Dear Sir,

For the past few months I've noticed a significant change in the paper and have been really pleased with the new layout the paper has been put through.

For so long ABSW was filled with countless crappy stories on Marconi and APIA and I speak for many readers that we stopped buying the paper whilst this was going on.

A year ago the ABSW should have been called the Marconi-APIA Weekly — it was that bad!

So many stories on these clubs was

too much for me to digest, not that I bothered reading them anyway.

Credit should go to the new guys at the Weekly, a new positive approach to the game has clearly been visible much to the shambles it was a year back.

Good to see that the weekly is now using their own stories rather than faxes and press releases sent to them by clubs — when someone relies on this it's a sign of poor journalism!

Andrew Vezos
Baulkham Hills, NSW.

OFF THE CROSSBAR



By Allan Crisp

CITY FOR SALE AGAIN

For the second time in 18 months Adelaide City Force has reportedly hoisted the "For Sale" sign over the 56-year old club.

City president Bob D'Ottavi last Wednesday told the Adelaide "Advertiser" he would be willing to sell his beloved club for \$1 million to any potential owner.

In May of 2001, D'Ottavi put forward details of an ownership plan calling for club members to invest anything from \$50 to \$50,000 with \$1 shares to be issued through a new unlisted public company.

But, the members voted for the club to remain a community organisation with funds to be raised through donations.

D'Ottavi made his latest comment in response to speculation that Bianco Building Supplies was a potential buyer.

However, Bianco sales and marketing manager Dario Fontanarosa replied, "I don't know how that has started but we are a sponsor, that's it."

"We have a close relation-

ship with Adelaide City but it doesn't extend beyond sponsorship. "There is no intention on our part to buy the club."

D'Ottavi, who is general manager of City's naming rights sponsor, Best Bricks and Pavers, has bankrolled the club to the tune of \$3.2 million over the past three years.

He told "The Advertiser" that the immediate future of the club was secure. "It costs me money to run the club, but people who think I am going to walk away or close the club don't know Bob D'Ottavi," he said.

"I know we have had some difficult times but I can see the light at the end of the tunnel."

When the difficulties at board level at Soccer Australia are resolved, which I think they will be in a few weeks, I think that will be the trigger."

As the clubs guarantor, D'Ottavi is responsible for the debts and atones for any shortfall in revenue.

City had a windfall earlier this season when South Australian property developer Gordon Pickard renewed his sponsorship of the club by injecting a six figure sum over the next two seasons.

Before that agreement was reached it was widely believed that Pickard intended to mount a takeover bid for the Force, but instead the support option was gratefully accepted by D'Ottavi.

The City president reinforced his commitment to the club by stating on Friday that he has no immediate plans to sell.

"If a potential buyer came

to us we would consider the proposal but we are not actively looking for a buyer," D'Ottavi said.

007 IS AS GOOD AS HIS BOND

Adelaide City Force has a spy in its ranks but the only shots he intends to fire are of the friendly nature.

He is Massimo Morales an official scout for Italian giant AC Milan and he is visiting Adelaide to run the rule over City's youthful talent.

Morales intends to take in as many NSL games involving the Force as possible during his three weeks stay.

"I know a fair bit about Australian players because they have been doing well in Europe for about 20 years, but it is a good opportunity to see where they come from," Morales said.

Morales reported that former City youngster Mario Kariovic, who joined AC Milan and was loaned to feeder club Serie C outfit Cittadella this season, is progressing well.

"Mario has adapted to the conditions in Italy," he said, adding a cautionary note, "The pressure is great and you have to be a professional 24 hours a day."

Morales was assistant coach at Bayern Munich when the Bundesliga club was managed by Giovanni Trapattoni. Morales also was chief coach of the Ghana national team and his most recent appointment was with Italian Serie C club Varese.

BIANCO NIGHT SERIES

Newly promoted Enfield Falcons and Croydon Kings will flash into Bianco Summer Night Series action in the first week of the new eight team competition.

Free spending Enfield have drawn to meet Olympic FC in the opening match of the series on Wednesday, January 22, while Croydon Kings clash with Playford Patriots in the first match on the double header card on Friday, January 24.

GROUP A

Raiders, MetroStars, Playford Patriots, Croydon Kings

GROUP B

Blue Eagles, Modbury Jets, Olympic FC, Enfield Falcons. 2003 Bianco Summer Night Series at the Marden Sports Complex

ROUND 1

Wednesday, January 22
Olympic FC v Enfield Falcons (6pm)
Raiders v MetroStars (8pm)

Friday, January 24
Playford Patriots v Croydon Kings (6pm)
Blue Eagles v Modbury Jets (8pm)

ROUND 2

Monday, January 27
MetroStars v Playford Patriots (6pm)
Enfield Falcons v Blue Eagles (8pm)

Wednesday, January 29
Modbury Jets v Olympic FC (6pm)
Croydon Kings v Raiders (8pm)

ROUND 3

Wednesday, February 5
Croydon Kings v MetroStars (6pm)
Blue Eagles v Olympic FC (8pm)

Friday, February 7
Enfield Falcons v Modbury Jets (6pm)
Raiders v Playford Patriots (8pm)

ROUND 4

Monday, February 10
Play-offs
Wednesday, February 12
Semi-Finals

ROUND 5

Friday, February 21

FINAL - THIRD PLACE PLAY-OFF

GREAT PICK-UP

Adelaide City Force have enlisted the aid of Serco Adelaide Buses in bringing primary school children to their Oakden Ram Park headquarters for training session with their NSL players.

The budding stars will be collected from the schools and transported to Ram Park by the Serco drivers after enlightening 40-minute training sessions.

Complementary drinks,

show bags and free game tickets will be provided to the young players before they are transported back to school.

The program has been booked until late February, but plans are in hand to continue the service until May.

KEEPING BUSY

SASF goalkeeping coach Chris Terpeou is hot to trot with two school holiday clinics scheduled for January and February.

From Tuesday, January 7 until Friday January 10, Terpeou will be at Modbury Jets Golden Grove ground to impart eight hours of specialised coaching covering all aspects of the art.

Terpeou will repeat the exercise at the Parks Community Centre from Tuesday, January 17 until Friday, January 17.

Apart from the goalkeeping tips and hints, the clinic also provides the opportunity to be identified for future SASF development programs.

All participants are fully covered under the SASF personal accident and public liability insurance scheme.

Closing date for applicants is Wednesday, December 18. Cost is \$90 plus GST. Contact: Chris Terpeou. 8340.0688 or 0412.412.514.

TSONIS STAYS

Olympic FC have reported that George Tsonis will be staying with the Flames and not shooting with the MetroStars next season.

Whats more, Olympic has signed Neil Childs from Playford Patriots, Terry Smith from Port Pirates as well as Galaxy pair Peter Milhalopoulos and Paul Hoey.

In 2004, Olympic will be joining the clubs moving to new grounds when its Regency Park Stadium is completed.

During the 2003 season Flames fans can catch their favourite team at the Thebarton Oval.

Radio 1197am RPH Adelaide

Presents

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NSW Police Prepare for World Police Soccer Cup

The NSW Police Representative Soccer Team has kicked off its World Police Cup campaign preparation for the World Police and Fire Games to be held in Barcelona in July, next year.

The NSW Police have been busy recruiting new players from the Police College and from within the ranks to have a crack at the best in the law enforcement and emergency service world, following on from their successful campaign winning the silver medal at the International Law Enforcement Games in Ottawa, Canada recently after losing to Russia in the final.

The Squad has been bolstered by the recruitment of ex-national league and overseas players who have joined the Force or are due to graduate from the Police College in December. Manager, Inspector Doug McKenzie is confident that the Squad's early preparation and recruitment of new players will hold them in good stead in the forthcoming World Cup.

New players coming into the squad are Paul Wearne - ex Australian Under 20 representative and Northern Spirit midfielder, John Karoubas - ex Sydney Olympic national league goalkeeper and

AIS graduate and Brett Hill - ex-Marconi national league and Japanese J League centre forward. Other players such as Sean Woods - ex-Marconi and Leichhardt Tigers goalkeeper will be at the Police College in January and hope to graduate in May 2003, just in time to join the Squad.

"Looking at the experience of previous tours and the likelihood of professional military police sides being in the Cup, it will be a challenge, but we will be well prepared with 9 months of constant training and matches against teams such as the Marconi Stallions Reserves and Bonnyrigg White Eagles as a regular part of the preparation."

"We have a Charity Cup Match against the NSW Fire Brigade on 29 December as the lead up game to the Olympic Sharks and Melbourne Knights at Sharks Park, Cronulla, thanks to the support and assistance of Peter Raskopolous at the Olympic Sharks."

"We're also playing a match against the Serbian Community on 8 January 2003 at the Serbian Centre, Elizabeth Drive, Bonnyrigg in which this match will be launched by a leader of the Serbian Community and is a local Green Valley Command policing initiative."

ROBERT DOYLE'S VIEWS ON SOCCER IN AUSTRALIA

Victorians went to the polls last Saturday to elect a new State Government. ABSW's Brendan Davis speaks to the man, Opposition leader Robert Doyle about his views

BD: Do you follow an NSL team and if so, who?

RD: I follow the fortunes of both Melbourne clubs - South Melbourne and Melbourne Knights. I have a soft spot for Old Scotch/Waverley where many of my former students still play. In England I follow Manchester United.

BD: Under the Kennett Liberal Government soccer enjoyed healthy support from the Government. What support should we expect from your government?

RD: As I said, we will continue the support and assistance we have given local soccer in my time as opposition leader. I know the work, for instance, that Peter Katsambanis has put in recently to assist South Melbourne. In government we can do more.

Soccer is hugely popular in Australia. It is great to see so many younger children playing the game and we will give every support to soccer. The administration of the game, however, does need to be fixed, or we'll suffer at the local club level. It is time for individual egos and but

terness to be put aside for the good of the game.

BD: What are the features of your sports policy?

RD: The Liberal Party released a comprehensive sports policy in Knox earlier this month. Our plan to advance Victorian sport is based on encouraging increased levels of participation in physical activity. While we are a celebrated sporting state, an even prouder achievement would be to have the highest rates of physical participation in Australia.

At the forefront of our plan is the establishment of a new \$50 million Eastern Sports and Aquatic Centre in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, mirroring the highly successful Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre. Other plans include the creation of Club Administration Officers to assist grass roots sporting clubs with their administrative requirements. This will cost \$3 million per year.

BD: Junior soccer faces a shortage of grounds as one of its major problems. How can this best be addressed?

RD: I know junior soccer faces problems, as does senior soccer. In my own local area, the Stonnington Council has banned new teams from being formed because they cannot find grounds for them. The local and very successful Stonnington City Soccer Club will be unable to play in the local area if it stays

successful and keeps getting promoted to higher divisions because appropriate grounds and facilities are not available locally.

With careful planning and a long-term plan, however, we can address these problems.

For example, I recently announced that a future Liberal Government would commit \$2 million for a youth, sport and recreation complex in Torquay. Soccer grounds are included in the plans for this complex as junior soccer players in the area are currently playing on sub-standard grounds. By identifying these opportunities we are showing leadership and giving more opportunities for young people to play soccer.

BD: What sport(s) do you play and follow?

RD: I play tennis but follow all sport - I'll watch anything.

BD: Who are your favourite sports people?

RD: Harry Kewell, John Newcombe, Polly Farmer, Kieren Perkins, Damien Oliver, Cathy Freeman, Mark Skafte.

BD: Steve Bracks announced a bid for the 2014 World Cup without consulting or securing the support of Soccer Australia, our governing body, something many soccer administrators were extremely critical of and certainly something FIFA would be well aware of. His actions

have certainly jeopardised Melbourne's chances in securing this prestigious event. What can you do to correct this?

RD: Bringing the World Cup to Australia would be an Australian sporting dream come true and I am a strong advocate of Melbourne hosting World Cup games in the future. In government, I will continue to support any bid for the World Cup, but realise that the bid must be driven by our peak soccer administration. If we are serious about securing the World Cup, it must be done in a united manner but driven by Soccer Australia. That is something I will strongly promote.

BD: Are there other major events you can secure for Melbourne and Victoria?

RD: The World Cup is the main prize and I will act with the Federal Government and Soccer Australia to maximise our chances of bringing it to Australia.

The Liberal Party has an undisputed track record of securing major sporting events for Victoria and we will build on that record.

One thing I would like to see happen is attracting major European teams to use Victoria as a pre-season training base. We have the facilities to offer major European teams such a base, which would have spin offs such as exhibition games

KAMASZ SILENT

Acting Soccer Australia (SA) chief executive Stefan Kamasz believes the governing body could make an announcement within the week on an apparent settlement with Channel 7 over television rights.

But he has refused to confirm that SA board member and IEC general manager Dominic Galati will be paid up to \$650,000 to broker a release.

Fuzzing at the leaking of confidential documents which apparently show that he personally signed off on an agreement to pay IEC a commission of at least \$50,000 but up 20 percent of any settlement above \$3million, Kamasz refused to elaborate.

"I can neither confirm nor deny," Kamasz said on SBS' TheWorldGame show.

"I'm not one of these people who attends board meetings and then afterwards decides they're going to leak information one way or the other."

Despite his constant "no comment", Kamasz was willing to cruise Channel 7 for failing to provide coverage.

"What the public should be concerned about is that Channel 7, with whom we've had an agreement since 1998, are not living up to their end of the bargain at the moment," he said.

"The public have a right to know when that issue is going to be resolved and I would hope that the board of Soccer Australia will be in a position within the week to tell them the outcome of that."

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE WITH PFA Chief Executive Brendan Schwab

By Mark Stavroulakis

MS: You are the man behind the concept of starting the Australian Premier League, in your own views what is the criteria and what will it involve?

BS: "We will be making a public announcement in due course about the detail of our model but where the PFA has come from is that obviously the NSL has struggled badly in recent years and the main reason for that is its been unable to engage the millions of Australians that are interested in soccer.

Our primary role is to advance in the well being of the players. The players themselves have paid a terrible price in recent years illustrated with the collapse of clubs such as Carlton, Morwell Falcons, Canberra Cosmos and even a traditional club such as West Adelaide, so we've lost both the new type of club and old.

The starting point for the viability of any competition is whether or not its going to be supported in sufficient numbers by the soccer fan and we have invested considerable resources in undertaking the necessary research in analysis to have that question answered.

We believe that if the competition is properly capitalised and positioned in the market place then the Australian Premier League will be a very popular proposition with the person that counts the most and that is the soccer fan."

MS: How will you be choosing the ten teams said to be involved in the new Premier League model?

BS: "What's important to understand is the basic requirement and the ability of any team to engage in its own market place. There are essential propositions that clubs need to look for and that is:

- They have to play high quality football

- They have to have a great atmosphere in their stadium

- They have to be a very strong band

- And finally have a very strong presence in their local community.

This also involves building the game from the grassroots up and not simply trying to position the club that its attractive to commercial Australia.

Our model is simply not the case of here is the criteria and if you don't meet the criteria then it won't work. That's been Soccer Australia's approach historical

and as I understand that that's the approach their still arguing for that the clubs will set a series of benchmarks and if the existing clubs don't meet those benchmarks then they'll simply be cut from the competition.

Our approach is the opposite, its firstly identifying what the soccer fan wants and then delivering that to them. Also greatly assisting the existing clubs in developing themselves so that they can operate at a level that they will be ultimately successful."

MS: Will we see a salary cap introduced in Australian soccer?

BS: "We will not agree to a salary cap in the existing competition because the necessary preconditions are not in place for the salary cap to work.



PFA Chief Executive Brendan Schwab.

Last week at our General Meeting we discussed a lot of issues and the salary cap was one of them.

A salary cap does not equate to a reduction in players payments, what it equates to is ensuring the player payments that are within reasonable levels so that the game can invest in other critical areas such as commercial operation, marketing, ensuring the venues are of good quality and also investing in grassroots game development.

At the moment we have clubs spending too much on player payments relative to their revenues and that means that their not making the necessary investments in building their revenue streams. You'll find that Perth whilst it pays its players the most

in absolute terms, probably has the lowest percentage its turnover, being spent on player payments."

MS: You have stated that the APL will be established in time for the 2004/05 season, what should the clubs do next season?

BS: "The reality is that we are only going to get one chance to get this competition up and running in a commercially successful manner. If we fail now then the next opportunity we will have won't be for several years. For example in America the North American soccer league collapsed in the early 80's and Major League soccer wasn't invented until the mid 1990's.

We have to introduce the new competition within a commer-

that actually vindicates the stance we are taking here for the APL. The reality is that apart from our model there's no plan for the National League and that means that the very future of the NSL is in jeopardy and we're going to see a contraction in the size of the NSL if nothing is done.

The question of there being a possible shut-down of the NSL for a 12-month period is not something we've put forward but its something that is very interesting that the governing body says that if we don't reform next year there could well be a shut-down."

MS: When will we see the APL model?

BS: "There are many issues currently confronting the game which unfortunately puts the game in a negative-side and I think we need to think about that. We are planning to launch this week but to be honest we are assessing the impact of what happened last week (4 SA resignations) and whether or not that's appropriate, that announcement has seen the media saturated with negative stories on soccer so we are still assessing it at this point in time."

MS: Do you think Australia has too many player agents and what are your views on the role of a playeragent in Australia?

BS: "We believe that its critical that any player has access to a high quality agent and our collective bargaining agreement enshrines the rights as players to be represented by agents.

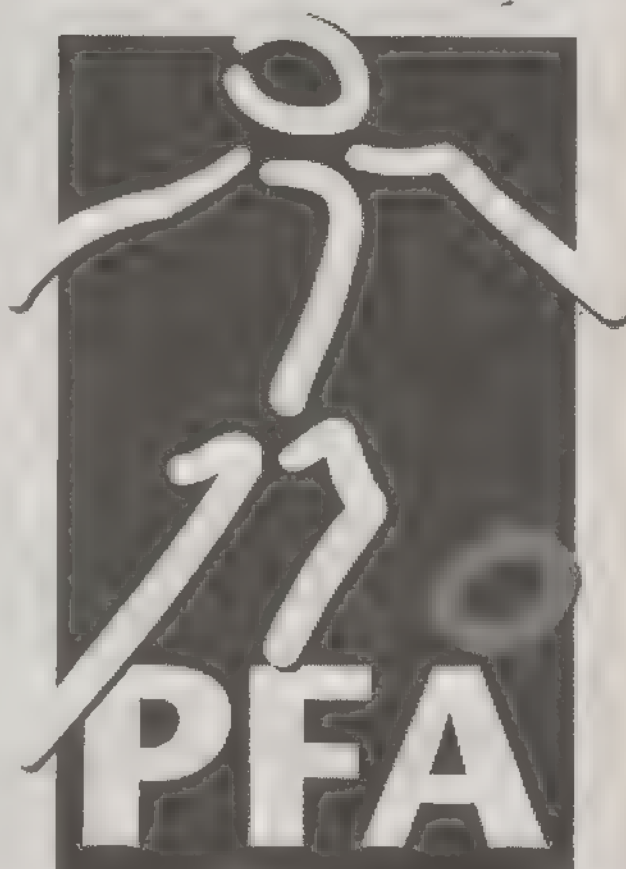
The PFA enjoys a working relationship with most agents but we are now analysing the feasibility of the PFA commissioning our own education on a voluntary basis.

Its important that the PFA in future will play a more active role in young players. Gordon Taylor (Chief Executive of the English PFA), announced that his organization intends to be very actively involved in representing young players so that young players don't have to make a major commercial decision regarding an agent until they turn 21 or 22 and are more established in a footballing sense.

This seems to be a very wise way to go because unfortunately in Australia we have many agents speaking to players and their families when the players are at a very young age and may not necessarily be in a position to make an informed decision."

MS: Is it a concern having clubs such as the Power and there is believed to be a few more clubs wanting to shut shop in the near future?

BS: "It's a great concern but



MS: Your opinion on the current TV rights issue?

BS: "Where soccer goes wrong is it focuses on its symptoms rather than the causes of those symptoms. At the moment we don't have a TV partnership, we have low crowds and we have low sponsorship figures.

The reason for that is because the National competition is not perceived as being a high quality competition. Also we do not have a well-organized international calendar for the Socceroos.

We shouldn't make any decision about media rights until we've reformed the game's content and that involves a strong international calendar set for the Socceroos. Very importantly though it involves a high national competition.

Our efforts need to go into those areas because then we will be developing some actual content that will be interesting to perspective media partners.

To try and solve the TV issue without reforming the game's content is to put the cart before the horse. We think the strategy is to sit down and maintain a good working relationship with Seven, adopt a strategy similar to what Ian Knop did with IBC in order to get the games commercial rights back.

What we have to understand is that there is a national television audience out there waiting to watch a high quality national competition and an even greater audience waiting to watch a full strength Socceroo side."

MS: Finally, after a week of the political drama surrounding the code with Ian Knop, Nick Greiner, Graeme Bowker and Alan Vessey resigning from their posts at SA, do you think the code given its new directions will prosper or will we have the same old story of yet another bad administration with the game going nowhere?

BS: "It's a very disappointing period for the game but I think there is consensus in the game at least on the principles of what's required.

There's consensus that we need an independent commission to run Soccer Australia, there's consensus that the existing board is only a caretaker board and finally there's a consensus that the national competition needs to be autonomous yet strategically aligned to SA.

That being the case, the next opportunity the game has to set in place a board that is going to have the necessary credibility in the market place, will be when the board is set in place pursuing to the recommendation being chaired by David Crawford.

The game in the short-term should only be acting on a caretaker basis in the way that is necessary to facilitate the reforms that every stakeholder agrees needs to occur.

Those reforms are the international calendar, the national competition and the governance and structure of the governing body."

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002/03

Valeri for Soccer Canberra President

By Graham Cooke

ACT Senior League chairman Walter Valeri has announced he will be a candidate to succeed Steve Dospot as Soccer Canberra president.

He said last week he would run on a ticket with Dean Grandy, a candidate for vice president, and Jose Del Rio, seeking one of the two directors' places. It is believed he will have at least one other opponent for the top job - businessman and former Canberra Cosmos board member Phil Rutherford. Valeri said his group's aim was to unite the soccer community and rejuvenate the game in the territory.

"We want to adopt a strategic plan with a three to five year time scale," he said. "The main aim will be to ensure that young players getting into the second half of their teenage years, will not be tempted to give up the game."

"To do this we have to adopt an attractive format for the local competition so that players who have not made the Academy of Sport or Blue Devils sides will still feel it is worth carrying on."

"It won't happen overnight, but if we can get a unified board with the support of the clubs, it will be a good start."

In the meantime Valeri was dealing with matters relating to his current position last night as senior



Senior League chairman Walter Valeri running for Soccer Canberra President.

clubs met to thrash out a format for next season's competition.

He said beforehand it was emerging that clubs wanted a combined competition from division one to however many it took to accommodate all those who wished to play, and that there should be automatic promotion and relegation between the top two divisions.

"Beyond that we have half-a-dozen different scenarios with one proposal for a six-team first division and another for 12," he said.

"My personal view is that we should have compulsory youth teams for the first division, with players in the current reserve divisions on playing at whatever standard of football suits them in the lower leagues."

Valeri said that if no decision was reached at last night's meeting, the clubs would meet again on the following Monday.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE 2002-2003 NORTHERN DIVISION RESULTS - ROUND 11

FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2002

ACTAS
(Cottanach 67')

1 Parramatta Power Youth 3
(Cardozo 19' pen, Theodoros 45', Gavaghan 68')

Northern Spirit Youth v AIS
Match not played due to adverse weather conditions

Newcastle United Youth
(Prentice 76')

1 QAS 1
(Barley pen)

SUNDAY 1 DECEMBER 2002

Sydney United Youth
(Glavas 15', 18', 27', 73', Bonar 25', Orlavic 33', Watkins 45')

7 Marconi Stallions Youth 0

Olympic Sharks Youth

0 Wollongong Wolves Youth 0

DEFERRED MATCH FROM ROUND 2 -
Played on 1st December 2002

Marconi Mustangs

0 QAS 0

BYE - Canberra Deakin
BYE - Marconi Mustangs

NORTHERN DIVISION - ROUND 11

TEAM	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
Parramatta Power Youth	9	6	2	2	1	27	12	20
Wollongong Wolves Youth	9	5	2	1	2	20	11	17
Sydney United Youth	8	5	0	2	3	23	12	15
AIS	8	4	3	2	1	12	6	15

Canberra Deakin	10	4	2	2	4	25	15	14
Olympic Sharks Youth	11	3	5	0	3	13	12	14
Newcastle United Youth	9	3	4	1	2	14	11	13
Northern Spirit Youth	8	3	2	2	3	6	5	11
ACTAS	7	3	1	2	3	11	13	10
QAS	9	2	2	2	5	12	25	8
Marconi Stallions Youth	9	2	1	2	6	9	26	7
Marconi Mustangs	9	0	2	2	7	2	26	2

NORTHERN DIVISION FIXTURES - ROUND 12 SATURDAY 7 DECEMBER 2002

QAS v ACTAS
Canberra Deakin v Newcastle United Youth
AIS v Marconi Mustangs

SUNDAY 8 DECEMBER 2002
Parramatta Power Youth v Sydney United Youth
Marconi Stallions Youth v Northern Spirit Youth

ROUND 13 MATCH -
To be played on 10 December 2002
ACTAS v Canberra Deakin

MATCH BROUGHT FORWARD FROM ROUND 15 -

To be played on 11 Dec 2002

Olympic Sharks Youth v AIS

BYE - Olympic Sharks Youth

BYE - Wollongong Wolves Youth

TOP SCORERS

SPALETA Michael	Canberra Deakin	8
GAVAGHAN Peter	Parramatta Power Youth	7
GLAVAS Luka	Sydney United Youth	7
WATKINS Daniel	Sydney United Youth	7
BRIDGE Mark	Parramatta Power Youth	6
BUONAVOGLIA John	Parramatta Power Youth	6
DE SILVA Timothy	QAS	6

WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

INDONESIAN VISIT

On the BYE weekend the Wolves entertained the Indonesian National team at Crehan Park, Cringila. A team made up of fringe players plus Wolves Youth Graders met the Indonesians in an entertaining match, watched by several hundred spectators.

The Indonesians won 2:1, being down by one goal at half-time, a penalty late in the latter part gave them victory. Matthew Galea was the sole goal-scorer for the Wolves.

Illawarra Soccer Progress or Stalemate?

While local senior and junior soccer players take a rest from weekly training or weekend competitions, the fans consider in lively discussions possible improvements to the present playing calendar.

ISA registered players total around 1400 last season, the Illawarra Amateurs field around 500, Church League, Leisure Coast, Business Association, BHP Interworks another 300 plus and several hundred Women soccer players, make up the bulk of senior soccer along the South Coast and Highlands. Add to those figures about 7000 juniors playing soccer from U/6's to U/18's the strength in numbers is huge.

Despite the prosperity, all is not well in Australian soccer. Public support is poor, media exposure not much, leadership from soccer Australia disaster at least at present, destroying all intentions of improvement.

Local soccer clubs and the ISA

are left on their own to foster their fortunes.

For 2003 the ISA has received 28 applications to play in the two competitions - the ICU Premier League and ICU Conference League. The individual clubs know where they compete - 12 in top grade and 16 in first division. The format stays the same for 2003, not ideal but cannot be altered for the new season.

Considerations should be given quickly to put up a different formula for 2004.

Players, coaches and clubs do prefer a home/away competition, giving every side a fair chance.

Several complicated proposals have been sent to the Association for the members to vote on.

Summarizing present numbers (28 clubs) and calculating more or less numbers in 2004, the solution should be kept simple. Form either two 14-team competitions or if additional clubs join in, make it three divisions of 10 teams each.

Perhaps each club may field only two teams - first grade and U/20's - to spread equal good players around. Suggestions tabled to establish something like a super league to concentrate on quality only with strong financial support does not look likely possible under present economic circumstances in Illawarra soccer.

The leading team in our area is the Wollongong Wolves in the NSL and we all should support them far more than the few hard-core fans.

Clubs, players, fans come forward please with constructive suggestions, write to the ISA Office with your ideas.

YOUNG DEAKIN SQUAD SET FOR SOUTH PACIFIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Graham Cooke

Fed Government ups the ante on its review of Australian soccer. Sports Minister Rod Kemp last week vowed to continue with a review into Soccer Australia.

SA chairman Ian Knop, director Graeme Bowker, chief executive Alan Vessey and president Nick Greiner resigned last Wednesday, complaining the board of SA was opposed to vital reforms.

The remainder of the Board have cast doubt on whether the results of a government-sponsored review of the sport will be accepted.

However the Federal Government has the upper hand and will withdraw all funding of Australian soccer unless the recommendations of the review are implemented.

Further it is believed FIFA are

concerned about the current state of Soccer Australia and will step in to ensure the necessary reforms occur. The review is expected to be critical of SA and recommend radical changes to the running of the code.

Senator Kemp said the government remains committed to the review.

"The review is progressing very well and receiving wide-spread positive support," he said.

"The continuing difficulties in soccer illustrate the importance of the review and the review will continue."

"The review is happy to work with all stakeholders."

Senator Kemp said it is possible the review may be completed a few months before its expected deadline mid next year.

"We haven't got a specific deadline but because the review is going so well we maybe able to bring it forward," he said.

Farina's job in jeopardy?

Soccer Australia (SA) has reportedly held talks with super coach Boris Milutinovic, putting the future of current Socceroos coach Frank Farina in doubt.

SA commissioner Dominic Galati told The Australian that he had talked with Milutinovic in the United States recently but denied the Serbian had been offered the head coaching job.

"We spoke for a short time and there was some discussion regarding soccer but not the coaching job."

According to the newspaper, SA is chasing Milutinovic to be Australia's technical director, the position previously held by Les Scerif. If appointed as technical director, Milutinovic would be responsible for the running of the four national representative teams: the Socceroos, the Olympic Games squad, the Young Socceroos (under-19s) and the

Jocys (under-17s). Presently Farina has full control of the Socceroos and Olyroos and would reportedly be unwilling to give up those responsibilities.

In a further concern to Farina, Milutinovic has an impressive coaching resume, being the only coach to take five different countries to the World Cup finals. Four of those teams have progressed to the second round of the prestigious tournament.

Farina was reappointed by SA for another four-year term in charge of the Socceroos earlier this year despite the national team failing to qualify for the World Cup.



Frank Farina.

PREMIERSHIP BIZZARIO

Nige and Fergy here from Bananatv's Premiership Bizzario. Every week we're going to give you our views and opinions on what's going on, and off, in the English Premiership.

There's serious trouble at Leeds United. Or in local parlance - There's trouble at 't' mill. Elland Road has been hogging all the headlines this week. For the wrong reasons.

Tel Boy has the deadlier than an irritated Tarpan 'vote of confi-

dence' to his name and 9 games left to turn it round. Then Chairman Risdale says "this ain't so". There will be a fire sale in January when we can expect

Dacourt, Duberry, Bowyer, Harte, Bridges and Fowler all to take the 4:37 train from Elland Junction to Nowhereland.

Rizzo and Frenchy could really cash in on Alan Smith, who must be on heat right now as every club and its dog mascot are chasing the Yorkshire ripper.

As if that is not enough, Risdale has put his steely toe caps on, to hoof into Leary David's knackers claiming that the clubs woes can be attributed to Leary.

It all makes Brian Clough's 47 days look positively serene. Fergy is expecting a call from Risdale around New Year.

Carlos Valderama, him of the massive hair, has been honoured in his hometown in Columbia by having a 6-metre tall 7-tonne brass statue unveiled as the greatest player the country has ever

produced.

Apparently the weight of the statue would have only been 3 tonnes if Carlos had only decided to cut off his enormous barnet before the sculptor started.

Referring to a story we reported on a couple of weeks ago...Bozo Bosnich.

He has really hit the skids by checking himself in for a check up from the neck up, as he now deals with depression. Maybe he should be more depressed about his lack of football



Premiership Bizzario

The Jason Donovan look alike is wandering down the same path as his idol. Expect to see Bozo hosting the mardi gras in a bin liner.

Man Utd are forging up the fair play table. They are currently joint 2nd with Charlton. Why is this worth talking about? Because this is the 1st time this has happened since Royston joined the ranks.

Expect things to totally change in a few weeks, when Keane comes back with a vengeance to kick his way around the Premiership.

See you next week.

Nige and Fergy

To catch Nige and Fergy on Premiership Bizzario, their internet TV show, go to www.bananatv.com

And click on Premiership Soccer. New episodes added each week. Don't miss it.



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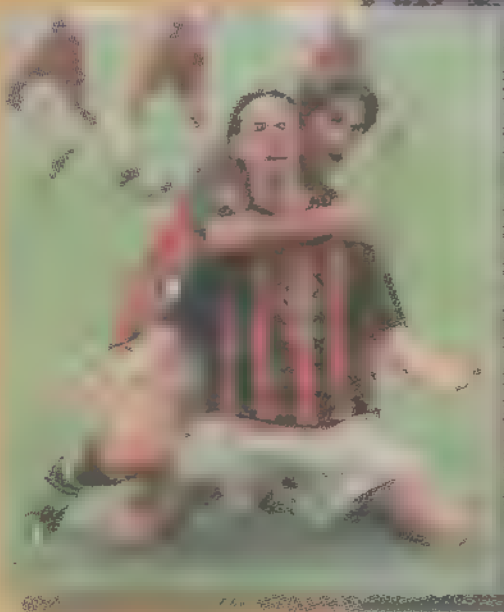
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Sharp-Shooters of European Football



By
Carlos Furtado



Defensive Masters



By
Carlos Furtado



From The Dressing Sheds

By Mark Stavroulakis

Certainly not a first in Australia but yet again the political saga currently crippling the sport was once again hit the news in almost every media outlet last week. The resignations of chairman Ian Knop, President Nick Greiner, Chief Executive Alan Vessey and Independent Commissioner Graeme Bowker from

Les Avory and Bill Walker all opposed Knop's tenure at the top.

After 15 uneventful months as chairman of the code it was clearly evident that there was hardly any progress in the game today.

The National Soccer League currently has no major sponsor, no TV Rights deal and crowds are decreasing by the round - a sign that no positive steps were

owner and current SA Director Paul Afkos are both vying for the top position.

Reports suggest Nogarotto looks the firm favourite in gaining the position after he was nominated as the NSL club's board representative in place of the departed Ian Knop.

-Having been inundated with a number of phone calls since the resignation of Ian Knop the main talking point was why Millionaire businessman Frank Lowy wasn't or has not been approached as a possible candidate for soccer's number one job?

Lowy was one of the founding fathers of the league in Australia and has been known from turning a small business venture into one of the biggest and most successful shopping centres in Westfields.

The credible businessman has the soccer knowledge, as he was also the man behind bringing Sydney City to the Australian league some years back.

Will we ever see his presence in the game again? His records speak for itself, many soccer followers assume that he is the man for the job as SA chairman.

Four months into his job as Chief Executive of SA, Alan Vessey decided to resign after failing to attain the support of the current new board.

Vessey staged the much-anticipated Socceroo match against England next year and also had plans of staging other friendly matches for Frank Farina's squad.

It would be interesting to see who grabs Vessey's position?

-Club for sale - Parramatta Power last week put themselves on the transfer market after the club decided not to further invest in the side beyond their initial commitment until next May.

The Leagues Club is believed to have lost 9.8 million on the Power during the last three seasons and faces a further 2 million loss from the current season according to press reports.

Rumors have circulated that a 'prominent' Greek side has been interested in the Power venture however nothing has been officially stated as yet.

The recent TV collapse in Europe though has hindered many potential sides wanting to invest in the Australian game.

Power has voiced their departure date from the National League in May however there are many other stragglers in the current competition that could follow the same fate as Parramatta, thus outlining the point that not every club is safe from extinction.

Look for one of the so-called bigger clubs to experience a few problems in coming weeks.

-Tickets for the huge match between England and the Soccerroos have been put forward by the English Football Association for the fixture to be played in London next February.

Tickets become officially available to Australian supporters as of the 15th of December with a limit of four tickets per person.

The FA has allocated 3000 seats to travelling Australian supporters who wish to make the trek to Upton Park and it is expected that the 35,000-seat Boleyn Ground will be packed to the brim.

Cost for tickets start from \$89

-The Australian media have hit hard on the recent issue involving promising young star Brett Holman after his refusal to represent the U20's in their up and coming World Cup qualifiers.

The talented striker currently on-loan from Feyenoord to Excelsior has from reports impressed many in Holland with his sheer pace and ability to score goals.

Coach Ange Postecoglou has stated that he will not select players once they've turned their back on the country but ultimately the question must be raised as to whether it really was HIS decision not to play.

Leeds United stars Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka have been in recent times heavily persuaded by their club in choosing not to represent Australia so how different is this case to young Holman's?

With so much talent under his belt even Socceroo coach Frank Farina had eyed the former Parramatta Power striker as a possible

squad member in years to come.

Keep a close eye on a new Gatorade commercial set to hit the television screens in Australia very soon.

Why you ask? Sydney United stars Paul Bilokapic, Jon Angelucci, Commins Menapi Michael Cindric, Michael Cunico, John Perosh, Vince Savoca, Daniel Watkins, Ante Deur, Mark Rudan, Bozidar Cacic and almost the entire Parramatta Power squad will all make an appearance advertising the famous sporting drink.

Possibly a new career for the lads?

-Congratulations to Brisbane Strikers star Kris Trajanovski who played his 300th National League match against Newcastle United at Energy Australia Stadium.

'Traja' has spent 12 seasons in the NSL and has starred for five clubs (Preston, Olympic Sharks, Adelaide City, Marconi and now the Strikers).

Well done Kris, at age 30, there's still more games left in the former Socceroo.

-Talk around Sydney town is that the Olympic Sharks are looking towards shutting shop at Toyota Park and relocating back to Leichhardt Oval next season?

The Sharks have tried desperately in wanting to broaden its horizons by attracting a new crowd in the Sutherland area however recent crowd averages have shown a drop in crowd attendances.

A move to Leichhardt Oval could win back the many Olympic supporters who refuse to travel to Cronulla every home game.

-Clubs for sale 2 - Adelaide City Force - Soon after the Power made its decision that its open to any European club offers to buy

the club after the Leagues club stated that they will not continue any further venture at the end of their commitments next May, Force chairman Bob D'Ottavi has stated that the Force is also for sale - for a million dollars.

D'Ottavi stated to 'The Advertiser' last week that he would be open to any offers if the price was right.

"I don't want much but if someone came to me and said, 'Bob here's a million dollars', then I would probably accept it. A million sounds like a fair price."

So fellow readers if anyone is interested in buying a

Spirit and the Knights played at North Sydney Oval produced no more than 800 people to the game.

The crowd attendance as seen on Soccer Australia's website has it at 1002, a sad statistic indeed.

-Glory's Nick Mrdja is certainly one of those well-known impact players after the striker scored Perth's winner against the Force in the dying stages of the match.

Mrdja was gaining a starting eleven spot over highly rated striker Bobby Despotovski in recent matches however coach

Round 12 Fixtures

6/12/02

Marconi Stallions v Northern Spirit
Football Kingz v Newcastle United

7/12/02

Brisbane Strikers v South Melbourne

8/12/02

Parramatta Power v Sydney United
Melbourne Knights v Perth Glory
Wollongong Wolves v Adelaide City Force

Bye - Olympic Sharks

National Soccer League club contact the Force office on (08) 8334 8555.

-Poor Socceroo coach Frank Farina hasn't even kick-started his preparations for making the next World Cup and already the media has linked another coach to taking his spot.

Experienced World Cup campaigner Bora Milutinovic was contacted by new SA Director Dominic Galati last week but apparently nothing was said of a coaching position for the Soccerroos?

We might see Bora don the suit and tie and who knows, he could be one of SA's new Members?

-Round 11 has seen the Olympic Sharks scoot even further towards winning this season's Minor Premiership thanks to a comfortable three-nil win over the Wolves last week.

It was quite a hectic match with many hit-ups with one Wolf being the target.

'Chrome dome' Dino Mennillo was on the receiving end of many Shark supporters and players and it was evident throughout the match as tackles flew in everywhere on the experienced midfielder.

ABSW insiders stated that last week's match between the

Mich d'Avray decided to swap things around for the clash against Adelaide.

The final outcome? Despotovski was subbed for Mrdja in the 71st minute and in the 84th, Nick grabbed the eventual winner.

Mrdja the 'Ole Gunnar Solskjaer' of Australia?

-Congratulations should go out to Sydney United midfielder Ante Deur.

The 22-year-old scored two goals last week. One being the second goal which sunk Marconi's ship at Endors Park the other tying the knot last Friday-night - well done Ante.

-Finally, the Northern Spirit side received their wish of having three matches played on a later date due to three players committed to U20 Australian side.

*Round 12 - Marconi Stallions

*Round 13 - Parramatta Power

*Round 14 - Football Kingz

have all been rescheduled for a later date during the rest of the season.

Spirit youngsters Matthew Osman, Alex Wilkinson and Jonty Richter have all been selected in Ange's U20 squad for the up and coming Oceania Qualifiers in Vanuatu.

BAD BOY OF THE WEEK



John Buonavoglia
(Parramatta Power)

'Jockey' was given his marching orders by referee by Matthew Breeze in the 35th minute for simulation.

From all reports the second yellow card Johnny received was rather light however his first was spot on as the lively striker took a dive in trying to get an elusive foul.

Simulation was heavily monitored in the recent 2002 World Cup where FIFA sent out a stern message that players who cheat the system will be cautioned accordingly.

After finding it tough to break into the first team squad this season for the Power through strikers Pablo Cardozo and Royce Brownlie, Buonavoglia's prayers of playing full games were answered when the pair suffered unfortunate injuries.

This red card has set back the diminutive star that hopes to win back that form he once had during his Newcastle United days.

Soccer Australia was the main talking point in last week's head-lines.

It was only time until Knop and co were to eventually part company with SA even though the former chairman stated that he would vie to stay on and fight for his position as soccer's number one.

It all went pear shaped for Knop when the stakeholders voted new directors on the 26th October, namely Dominic Galati, Paul Afkos,

taken in helping the code out.

The only positive factor to come out of Knop's reign would have to be the Federal Government Inquiry into the management of the game.

-Who will step into the hot seat of being SA's new chairman? It's quite evident that two names have been listed as possible inclusions.

Current NSL Commission chairman Remo Nogarotto and former Perth Glory part-



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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON 2002/2003



NSW Premier League

MATCH OF THE ROUND



NSW Premier League

Bankstown City Lions	1
Blacktown City Demons	0

By Greg Stock

"It was as bad a game as we have played in a long long time" said Blacktown City coach Brian Brown after watching his side splutter their way through ninety minutes of uninspiring football at Jensen Park.

Not mincing his words, Brown was brutal and blunt after his team was out-playing by a spare parts Bankstown side missing five of its key first grade players. "Our commitment was woeful" continued Brown in his post game tirade, "our pass-

ing was weak and our support for the man with the ball was completely non-existent."

While the 1-0 scoreline did flatter the visitors a bit, there was no shortage of creativity or effort on the side of the Lions. Inspired by the creativity of former Socceroo Raphael Bove, they could have and should have scored 4 or 5 as they continually tore through the Demons midfield, seemingly at will. Blacktown were saved not by their own defensive efforts but by some poor passing options by the opposition forwards or the linesmen's flag. Norman Tome and Colin Luff called up five times during the second

half for offside infringements as Robbie Gomez cut a swathe down the right hand touchline.

In the absence of Elias Augerinos (knee), Glenn Moore (medial ligament), Rodney Madigan (knee cartilage), Yane Talcevski (groin), and Todd McManus (back), coach Lee Sterrey was forced to include the injured George Issa on the left hand side in a bid to play his strongest eleven.

Carrying an injured quad that required intensive treatment all week, George Issa was truly inspirational, scoring the lone goal and running himself into the ground for just over an hour.

Latching onto a square ball from Raphael Bove, Issa found the net with a great right foot strike after a cheap turnover from Ben Willard allowed the Lions an easy possession on their forward line. Norman Tome was the recipient as he found Bove just outside the penalty box to set up the ball for the goal.

To be fair, the Demons did have some patches of good play but by and large they were too inconsistent to mount and sustained pressure. In the 70th minute Simon Catanzaro hit the bar with a great shot from just outside the area while Damien Foxe found the waiting arms of Bradley Swancott with a misdirected header a couple of minutes later, with the goal at his mercy.

If one of those two efforts had have found the mark then maybe it would have stung the Blacktown machine into action, but without a definitive effort, they remained empty handed. Kain Rastall was his usual plucky self, darting here and there trying to get things moving, while Luke Roodenberg and Simon Catanzaro did have their moments, but a lack of quality ball in their front third kept their chances to a minimum.

One player who did impress was Bankstown City substitute Haysam Habbouchi. Coming on for George Issa, his twenty plus minutes on the park were full of effort, as he launched two shots on goal and looked strong and composed on his feet.

Lee Sterrey has had a great knack of coaching young talent over the years and he could be one to keep an eye out for in the coming weeks.



George Issa was inspirational for the Lions.

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS1

(George Issa 72)

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS0

at Jensen Park, Sefton.

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: Brad Swancott, Bryan Raeburn, Richard Luksic, Raphael Bove, Norman Tome, Colin Luff, Robert Issa, Robert Gomez, George Issa, Haysam Habbouchi (67), Alex Trpkoski, Damien Luksic
Coach: Lee Sterrey

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: John Crawley, Damien Foxe, Luke Roodenberg, Ben Willard, Simon Catanzaro, Dion Valle, Kain Rastall, Naoki Imaya, Patrick Galt, (Paul Yates 67), Jimmy Nikas, Dane Hokin
Coach: Brian Brown

Referee: Nick Asargiotis

Assistant Referees: David Finlay and Peter Verinder

Fourth Official: Keith Anderson



Norman Tome caused headaches for the Demons up front.

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EDITING: Adam Mark
PRODUCTION: Daniel Kuz, Wendy Vea, Mary Quinn
WRITERS: Greg Stock, Paul Goodwin, Graham Cooke, Lauren Mar
PHOTOGRAPHY: Carlos Estrada
★ An independent publication of the NSW Soccer Federation
NSWSF Valentine Sports Park
235-257 Mourants Lane,
GLENSIDE, NSW 2765
Phone: (02) 9623 1880
web: www.soccernsw.com.au

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NSW Premier League

Central Coast Coasties

1

C/bury-M/ville Olympic

1

By Paul Goodwin

Two highly industrious teams produced an intense and exciting contest at Plum Park and showed that work done in the off season is paying dividends.

Tough-tackling Canterbury-Marriickville did everything right until they lost midfielder Michael O'Riley, momentarily, following an injury.

It was during those all-too-brief moments, around the 76th minute mark, that the Coasties seized their opportunity and capitalised on any disorganization in opposition ranks and opened the scoring, to the delight of a vocal home crowd.

Marc Falzon received the ball from a poor clearance and danced his way through the Berries defence before planting his shot from 15 yards out into the right hand corner of the net.

It did look cruel luck for the visitors at the time, as they had shown immense effort and concentration and created chances themselves that failed to yield a goal.

In the end, however, it all came good due to a lapse in concentration by the Coasties deep into stoppage time.

The ball had been cleared to the 25 yard mark as the Coast defenders strove to retain their slender advantage and when the ball landed at the feet of opposition captain Allan Picken he slammed it low into the bottom right corner of Ben Xerri's net, through a packed penalty area, which may have left the young keeper.

Coast had at that stage already withstood a barrage of shots and looked to have defied the Berries, but this is a different side this season and their persistence paid off as the seconds of stoppage time ticked away.

The Coasties had made much of the early running in a game that was played hard and fair throughout and produced only one cau-



Marc Falzon scored the Coasties only goal.

tion. Some stout defending by Cormack Begley was responsible for the home side being disappointed twice in the first half hour thanks to timely tackles by the former Ryde City man.

Canterbury keeper Ivan Necevski also pulled off two fine saves late in the first half, Marc Falzon seeing his angled shot pushed away beyond the post and then a booming shot from Maguire was held well, down low, by the in-form custodian.

The second half was busier and began brightly for the Berries. Paul Bourke's rasping free kick from 20 yards out was saved superbly by Ben Xerri in the 48th minute.

Bourke also headed inches wide seven minutes later as Canterbury worked hard to break the deadlock.

The Coasties should have been ahead in the 73rd when a quickly taken throw allowed Aron Binskin to skip into the box and shoot from close range, but his effort missed the right post by some feet.

Just when it looked as if the clock would beat Canterbury and the Coast's dogged defence would earn them their second win on the trot, Picken was able to level the scores.

On balance it was no more than they deserved.

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES 1
(M Falzon 76)
C/BURY-M/VILLE OLYMPIC 1
(A Picken 93)
at Plum Park, Lisarow

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES: Ben Xerri, David Brewer, Sean Matthews (C), Mitchell Cook, Aron Binskin, Chris Fleming, Daniel Surridge (Liam Cameron 62), Marc Falzon (Peter Haynes 80), Tom Quilty (Nathan Byrn 62), James Monie, Josh Maguire. Sub not used: Andrew Goldman (RGK).

Coach: John McLafferty

CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE

OLYMPIC: Ivan Necevski, Sasha Utesenovic, Michael West, Cormack Begley, Ben Price (George Nohra 81), Paul Bourke, Allan Picken (C), John Kynazopoulos, Michael O'Riley, Shane Cevenin (Akwas Agyei 57), Aneleas Katsopoulos (Con Paradise 72).

Subs not used: Tristan Tulloch (RGK), Tom Marc.

Coach: Greg Woodhouse

Referee: Mark Hester

Assistant Referees: Gordon Selkirk and Brad Sargeant

Fourth Official: Darren Spod

Yellow Card: Central Coast Michael Cook 61

Bonnyrigg White Eagles

2

Rockdale City Suns

1

By Greg Stock

For the second week in succession, Rockdale's inability to run out the full ninety minutes cost them dearly, this time beaten 2-1 by Bonnyrigg.

Conceding the winning goal inside the last two minutes seems to be a trait that coach Bill Pilovski will need to work on if the Suns are to recapture the form that won them the Winter Super League title last season, this time surrendering a goal in the final thirty seconds to Bonnyrigg striker Joe Brun.

Partnering Spase Najdoski with the enigmatic Denis Ahilovic, Rockdale took the game to Bonnyrigg and looked the better of the two sides in the first half. A rare goal-keeping error by Fernando Greco saw him drop the ball, allowing Najdoski to sneak in and get enough of a touch to send the ball into the net, giving the visitors the deserved

lead at the break. But Bonnyrigg are made of sterner stuff and with the words of coach Ljube Jancev still ringing in their ears came storming back to make level it up in the 57th minute.

Midfielder Shane Knight the beneficiary of a neat pass from Kindness Agwu after he made some space up against the by-line, drilling the ball low and hard into the right hand corner of the net.

Once back on level terms the home side simply didn't let up, with the last ten minutes played exclusively in their front third.

Joe Brun finally breaking through deep into injury time, when he beat a mistimed tackle by Malcolm Bideau with a run down the left hand side, before cutting inside and slamming a shot home from the edge of the penalty box.

The loss leaves Rockdale at the foot of the Premier League ladder with a few unanswered questions to ponder, the win continuing Bonnyrigg's unbeaten start to the season.



Bonnyrigg captain Tayfun Devrimol, tussles with Rockdale's Denis Ahilovic.

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES 2
(Shane Knight 57, Joe Brun 93)
ROCKDALE CITY SUNS 1
(Spase Najdoski 40)
at Serbian Centre, Bonnyrigg

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES

Fernando Greco, Tayfun Devrimol, Asim Ogyur, Fernando Pellegrino, Shane Knight, Devrim Huseyin, David Harding, Freddy Umil, Joe Brun, Kindness Agwu, Aleksander Asanovic (Tony Trpceviski (Anthony Kanean)).

Coach: Ljube Jancev

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS Peter

Trpceviski, Richard Plesa, Ghenade Costin, Malcolm Bideau, Peter Apolovski, Eddie Wong (Trent Worral), Ben Deighan, David Brckell, Tony Ju, Denis Ahilovic (Anthony Adams), Spase Najdoski (Robert Todorevski).

Coach: B. Pilovski

Referee: Greg Leverton

Assistant Referees: Michael Johnson and Danny Adamopoulos

Fourth Official: Wayne Spagnol

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers

1

Belconnen Blue Devils

0

By Paul Goodwin

A.P.I.A. finally broke their Belconnen duck with a slender 1-0 win at Lambert Park on Sunday, courtesy of a Zlatko Arambasic penalty in the 50th minute.

A very tight game, typical of those previously played between these two sides, produced a first half that was full of strong tackling and plenty of Belconnen enterprise, but little in the way of goalmouth excitement.

The home side seemed content to sit back and they made few real attacking raids, until late in the half. The Blue Devils, meanwhile, were much more enterprising, but even they had few chances close to goal and the game looked like being a bit of a stalemate.

Daniel Macor and Marco Perinovic did look a good combination, but the latter was well taken care of by the new look Tigers defence and only Macor and David Arranz

managed shots at close range.

Macor drove wide from 12 yards in the 23rd minute and had a clever lob tipped over by Bob Catlin in the 30th, while Arranz scuffed his shot in the 24th after Mike Katz had chipped the ball forward, following a long throw from Adrian Dowling.

A.P.I.A.'s best moment was when Sam Larocca burst through and shot powerfully, low and at the keeper in the 37th.

The second half began with real purpose from the Tigers and a speedy move into the box by Zlatko Arambasic undid all of Belconnen's good work, as the tall striker invited a clumsy challenge from Stephen Kemp that was quickly ruled a foul by referee Simon Przydacz.

Arambasic had darted into the box on the right and looked to be going around Kemp, but the danger did not look great and the foul may have had more to do with Zlatko's man's craft and instincts, than any wilful intent. In any event a penalty it was and

Arambasic did not hesitate to take it.

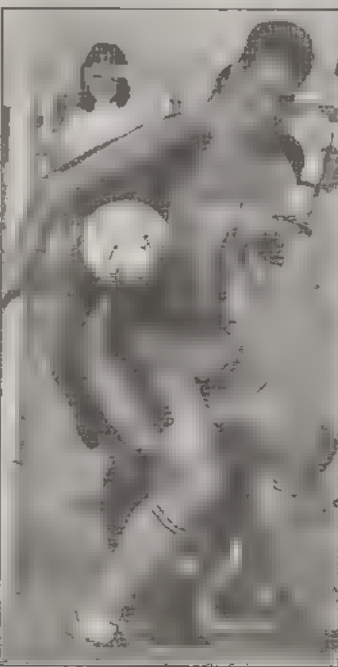
Sam Larocca usually takes the penalties for the Tigers and hitherto has had a high success rate, but there seemed little hesitation that the former NSL star, Arambasic, would have the honours and he duly netted.

The game was played keenly and only one player on each side was cautioned. Unusually, however, each of the pair was cautioned twice and sent from the field.

First, the Tigers' Tony Tesoro was penalized for a tackle from behind on Perinovic, after already collecting a card only minutes before and while that meant the home side was left with just ten men, it did not last long as Blue Devils' man Oscar Zamora also fell foul of the referee for a quite blatant tackle on John Paul Boutros and he, too, had to go.

The Tigers might have had a second goal, but for a superb block on the line by Zamora, after Boutros had converged on a ball cut back nicely from the byline by Arambasic in the 87th minute.

The game overall was evenly balanced and there was probably just an edge to the visitors in the first half and the hosts in the second. Damon Langan, Tesoro and Ante Monie all had strong games for the Tigers while Belconnen were well served by Macor, Lee Pietrukowski and David Arranz.



Zlatko Arambasic opened his NSW Premier League goalscoring account with a penalty.

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS 1
(Z Arambasic 49' pen)
BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS 0
at Lambert Park, Marion St, Leichhardt

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS: Bob Catlin, Paul Dee, Josip Monie, Marcus Stergiopoulos, Damon Langan, Tony Tesoro, Ante Monie (Jeremy Brown 78), Sam La Rocca, Andrew Clark, Zlatko Arambasic, Steve Karavatakis (John Paul Boutros 85). Sub not used: Murray Nelson (RGK), Ross Kethell.

Coach: Les De Cels

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS: Tony

Gannasca, Adrian Dowling, Matthew Caphia (Andrew Rakic 90), Lee Pietrukowski, Stephen Kemp, Oscar Zamora, Mike Katz, Elliot Zwagobani, Danny Macor (Jaime Mauro 74), David Arranz (Ivo De Jesus 74), Marco Perinovic. Sub not used: Valerio Galeotti, Francois Bangweni (RGK).

Coach: Lino Fiorese

Referee: Simon Przydacz

Assistant Referees: Michael Collins and David Bradshaw

Fourth Official: Adrian Tamplin

Red/Yellow Cards: A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tony

Tesoro 70, 74, Belconnen Oscar Zamora 50, 87



NSW Premier League

St George Saints	3
Fairfield Bulls	0

By Greg Stock

St George picked up their first win of the NSW Premier League season in emphatic style, beating Fairfield Bulls 3-0 in a lively contest at St George Stadium.

Showing up the Bulls defensive frailties, the Saints forwards were no match for the Fairfield defence even after the experienced Jason Connolly was thrown into the fray late in the first half.

It wasn't until the 23rd minute of the second half that there was a breakthrough on the scoreboard, but once it started, it didn't stop for the hapless visitors.

The opening goal coming from a Simon Verrinder volley after his header from a corner had been saved first time by Darren Moore, before the second sixteen minutes later, Bruno Beddoni disposed Sefer Yildiz and rounded Arthur Dilas before slotting home truly before an advancing Darren Moore, with Jason Lal scoring the third from a fine individual strike with just seconds remaining on the clock.

Given both sides early season form, the result was somewhat surprising as the Bulls did shade the home side for time in possession and shots on goal during the first half.

Marc Hoenselaars hit the bar twice and Mathew Borg missed a simple one-on-one which at that stage could have really



Craig Sharpley
(Fairfield Bulls)

changed the course of the match.

But really it was a lacklustre defence that undid Fairfield.

With Mitchell Daley forced to leave the field after half an hour with a leg injury and with the underdone Jason Connolly forced to do twice as much work as he should have, the game slipped away meekly after the first goal was scored. Sefer Yildiz tried hard but even he had problems in blotting out Bruno Beddoni who seems to have grown an extra leg these days.

For St. George, the real inspiration came from the back. Sebastian Sinozic, Luke McDougal and Jose Mendes weren't pretty, but they were effective, doing enough to keep the dangerous pair of Borg and Hoenselaars under control for the majority of the match.

Bulls coach Craig Sharpley, will need to get his players refocus for next week's clash against the Parramatta Eagles at home. Lapses in concentration by the defence will surely be punished by the Eagles.

ST GEORGE SAINTS 3
(Simon Verrinder 73', Bruno Beddoni 89', Jason Lal 92')

FAIRFIELD BULLS 0
at St George Stadium, Rockdale

ST GEORGE: Con Anastasiadis, Sebastian Sinozic, Jose Mendes, Simon Verrinder, Luke McDougal, Max Sevares, George Maglis, Achileas Markopoulos, Evangelos Petratos, Orhan Dincar (Jason Lal), Bruno Beddoni.
Coach: Manny Spanoudakis.

FAIRFIELD BULLS: Darren Moore, Sefer Yildiz, Arthur Dilas, Mike Daley (Jason Connolly), Adam Snyder, Ismael Arratia, Stewart Van Bentum, Adam Peatey, Robert Angievski, Marc Hoenselaars, Mathew Borg.
Coach: Craig Sharpley
Referee: Alex Glasgow
Assistant Referees: Andrew Kaya and Adam H. Sz.
Fourth Official: Jim N. Kiriakou

Parramatta Eagles	0
Penrith Panthers	0

By Paul Goodwin

This game was always expected to be a tight one and in many ways Penrith, always good early season performers, had the edge and could have snatched the win at the finish.

The game was keenly contested throughout and in many respects an entertaining spectacle for those who came along to Melita Stadium.

Parramatta relied heavily on their set pieces with Mark Reveley always a threat in the box, but never able to make his presence really telling on this occasion.

Jason Holmes did well to save from Luke O'Connell in the first half, but generally the defences were on top in this game and chances were infrequent.

When John Calleja introduced both Nathan Rivera and Geoff Howarth at the hour mark there was still plenty of work left for the Panthers' defence, but they responded well.

The main talking point was the unfortunate clash of heads between Panthers' keeper Chad Taylor and livewire Eagles' midfielder Daniel Borg in the 80th minute.

Both players required lengthy attention and each of them needed stitches in head wounds.

While both players needed to be replaced after a ten minute hold-up, only one was transported to hospital by ambulance, the other being conveyed by car.

The condition of Panthers' keeper Taylor meant that he needed ten stitches, but Borg was badly concussed and details of his injuries were not released at the time of completing this report.

The players had challenged for the ball and it had already been cleared when the momentum brought them together heavily and unavoidably.

Replacement keeper Kurt Van Arkels did a sterling job, after coming on cold and kept the Parramatta strikers honest.

The match did have its late flurry of excitement when in the 88th minute Jason Sciberas got away down the left, side-stepped Reveley and fed a ball over for Daniel McCann, after Jason Holmes had already been drawn at the near post.

McCann shaped to score, but Geoff Dwyer was able to clear off the line, much to the relief of home supporters.

For Parramatta Dwyer, Mark Reveley and

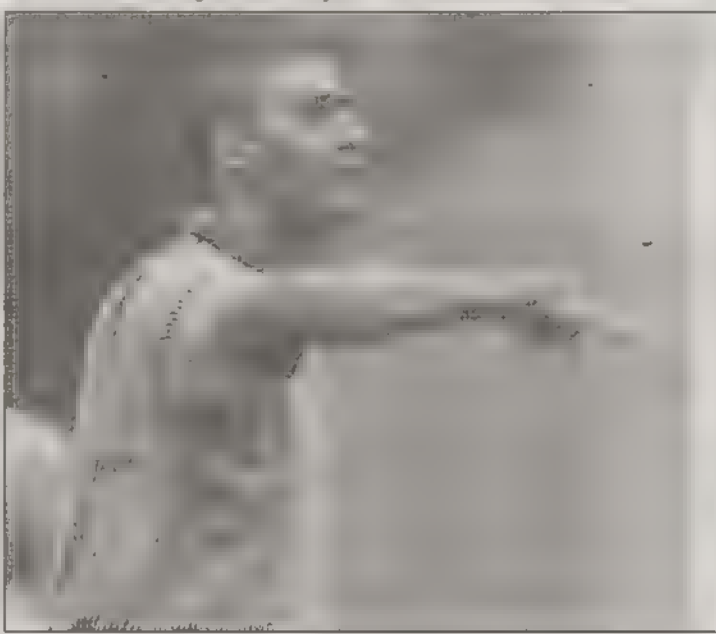
Anthony Mondello all had strong games, while the Panthers were well served by Chad Lewis, McCann, Luke Boyd and Peter Bennett.

This result mirrors the good early start that Penrith made to the last season and in many ways Parramatta's campaign has begun in similar fashion.

Penrith will look to go on with the job

next week, too, with another exciting derby against Blacktown in prospect. The Demons are still looking for their first win and will make life very interesting for the crowd at Andrews Road.

Parramatta, on the other hand, travel to Fairfield, a side that is yet to win, so will be certain of another warm reception.



Parramatta Eagles coach John Calleja calling the shots.

PARRAMATTA EAGLES 0

PENRITH PANTHERS 0
at Melita Stadium, South Granville

PARRAMATTA EAGLES: Jason Holmes, Michael Klads, Geoff Dwyer, Mark Reveley, Daniel Borg (John Kelso 80), Mauricio Isias (Nathan Rivera 59), Anthony Mondello (Geoff Howarth 59), Anthony Mitiga (John Kelso 90), Matt O'Shea, Ben Delicata, Adam Anderson. Sub not used: Liam Curran (RGK).
Coach: John Calleja

PENRITH PANTHERS: Chad Taylor (Kurt Van Arkels 80), Rod Hutchison, Daniel Weiss, Peter Bennett, Luke O'Connell, Jason Sciberas, Chad Lewis, Daniel McCann, Danny Hinton (Shane Hammond 78), Jim O'Connell (Luke Tyurski 80), Luke Boyd. Subs not used: Osvaldo El Ali, Dave Gardiner.
Coach: Tony Rasmussen
Referee: Wayne Crabb
Assistant Referees: Leonai Ramero and Gerard Parsons
Fourth Official: Terry Goodhew
Yellow Cards: Parramatta: Matt O'Shea 43, Anthony Mitiga 51, Ben Delicata 71. Penrith: Danny Hinton 4, Daniel McCann 50.

FROM THE SIDELINES By Greg Stock

*Former Canterbury-Marrickville and St. George goalkeeper Jose Bello-Amigo has finally achieved his ambition of playing some first team football in Europe. After leaving at the beginning of last year to pursue his dream of an overseas career, 'Bello' has been the starting goalkeeper for Racing Ferrol in the Spanish Second Division for the past four weeks. Given that he came directly from the NSW Premier League, the achievement is considerable, and is another example of how this league is improving with every season. Four weeks ago he played in the 'Copa Delrey' which is the Spanish version of the FA Cup and kept impressively against Deportiva La Coruna despite 2-4 scoreline. From the Sidelines hopes to catch up with Jose at some stage in the next few weeks, with a story to follow suit.

*While we noted that last weekend was of great celebration in the Turner household, this week has not been so hot, with news that his horse 'Le Roi Brown' has broken down after his courageous win at Randwick. Young Le Roi fractured his knee and will be out of action for at least 4 months and only

has a 60% chance of ever racing again. Our condolences John

*Congratulations to Blacktown City defender Damien Foxe on his engagement to long time girlfriend Karen McKechnie. Foxey and his friends hammed it up at the engagement party a couple of weekends ago, with a number of Demons in attendance. From the Sidelines would like to extend our best wishes to both Damien and Karen.

*Our apologies to Central Coast defender Mitchell Cook for referring to him as Michael in our match report of their 2-0 win over Rockdale in Round One. A former Newcastle Breakers and United youth squad player, Cook made his way to the Coasties via Highfields Azzuri and has been a sensation in the defence since his arrival. His goal against Rockdale was something special with coach John McLafferty predicting a bright future for youngster.

*Speaking of the Coasties, the trip to John Crehan Park in Cringila proved a big day out for the

boys with the team assembling at 10.30am on the coast, in preparation for the trip south. After finishing the first grade match at 9pm, the bus didn't leave the south coast till 9.30pm and arrived back up on the coast sometime just after midnight. With the three points they collected, the mood on the way back I'm told, was one of fun and much frivolity!

*The African presence at Henson Park continues with Ghanain born Akwasi Agyei debuting for the Berries against the Coasties. Agyei a former Sydney United and AC United striker made the trip to Canterbury at the insistence of friend Alan Picken and made a terrific debut on Saturday night.

*Those wondering about the whereabouts of former A.P.I.A. striker Andrew Falas will be pleased to know he is currently in Cyprus trialling with some First Division sides there. Another A.P.I.A. player in Ivan Zelic is in Malaysia trialling for a contract.

*From the Sidelines made mention of the larger than life haircut of the Bulls Sefer Yildiz last week, this time around it's the crazy locks of Simon

Catanzaro that's causing quite a stir. With his blond mohawk style cut he sticks out like the proverbial in the Demons engine room, much to the good hearted ribbing of his new team mates. Any readers who wish to nominate other players for the 'Archie Markopoulos Medal' for services to hard dressing, please email their suggestions to gregstock@optus-net.com.au

*Manly-Warringah Dolphins coach Phil Moss has announced his sides continuing partnership with Northern Spirit will continue for at least another year. Officials of both teams met during the week and came to an agreement that the Dolphins will receiving some on going support from their NSL neighbours. Moss also told 'From the Sidelines' that midfielder Steve Berry will be back for another season while goalkeeper Dean McCreath is recovering from a full knee reconstruction and should be fit for a return in round one. The other Manly goalkeeper Michael Frost is currently over in England trialling with Arsenal of all teams with the youngster asked to stay a further two weeks for the English giants to have another look at him.

NSW Premier League

ROUND 2 RESULTS

FIRST GRADE

Central Coast Coasties1 (M Falzon 76')	Bonnyrigg White Eagles2 (S Knight 57', J Bruni 93')	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers1 (Z Arambasic 49 (pen))
Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic ..1 (A Picken 93')	Rockdale City Suns1 (S Najdoski 40')	Belconnen Blue Devils0
St George Saints3 (S Verreder 73', B Beddoni 89', J Lal 92')	Parramatta Eagles0	Bankstown City Lions1 (G Issa 77')
Fairfield Bulls0	Penrith Panthers0	Blacktown City Demons0

UNDER 19

Central Coast Coasties0	Bonnyrigg White Eagles2 (B Mitrovich 8', M Simonovic 50')	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers3 (R Younis 4'/13', R Restuccia 75')
Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic ..6 (A Uccino 44/89', C Dumitriu 7', R Earp 14', B Boardman 22', M Mikhail 60')	Rockdale City Suns0	Belconnen Blue Devils1 (R Bray 80')
St George Saints3 (A Chahine 33'(pen)/41', K Saterdag 66')	Parramatta Eagles1 (D Kukucka 12')	Bankstown City Lions0
Fairfield Bulls0	Penrith Panthers1 (G Dowling 69')	Blacktown City Demons8 (B Stephan 5'/12', R Galayini 6'/17', B Vanega 28', D Storey 52', T Simpson 81', J Simpson 88')

FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Central Coast Coasties	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Penrith Panthers	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Parramatta Eagles	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
St George Saints	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Bankstown City Lions	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
C/bury M/ville Olympic	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Belconnen Blue Devils	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Blacktown City Demons	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Fairfield Bulls	2	0	1	1	3	6	1
Rockdale City Suns	2	0	0	2	1	4	0

UNDER 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blacktown City Demons	2	2	0	0	12	1	6
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	2	2	0	0	5	2	6
Penrith Panthers	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Parramatta Eagles	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
C/bury M/ville Olympic	2	1	0	1	7	4	3
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
St George Saints	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Rockdale City Suns	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Belconnen Blue Devils	2	1	0	1	4	5	3
Fairfield Bulls	2	0	0	2	1	5	0
Central Coast Coasties	2	0	0	2	2	10	0
Bankstown City Lions	2	0	0	2	1	10	0

NEXT ROUND

ROUND 3

FIRST GRADE

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Belconnen Blue Devils	v St George Saints	Sat 7 Dec	7.00pm	McKellar Soccer Centre
Penrith Panthers	v Blacktown City Demons	Sat 7 Dec	7.00pm	Andrews Road Field
Bankstown City Lions	v Central Coast Coasties	Sat 7 Dec	7.00pm	Jensen Park
Fairfield Bulls	v Parramatta Eagles	Sun 8 Dec	6.00pm	Nineveh Field
C/bury M'ville Olympic	v Rockdale City Suns	Sun 8 Dec	6.00pm	Henson Park
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	v Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Sun 8 Dec	6.00pm	Lambert Park

UNDER 19

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Belconnen Blue Devils	v St George Saints	Sat 7 Dec	4.30pm	McKellar Soccer Centre
Penrith Panthers	v Blacktown City Demons	Sat 7 Dec	5.00pm	Andrews Road Field
Bankstown City Lions	v Central Coast Coasties	Sat 7 Dec	5.00pm	Jensen Park
Fairfield Bulls	v Parramatta Eagles	Sun 8 Dec	4.00pm	Nineveh Field
C/bury M'ville Olympic	v Rockdale City Suns	Sun 8 Dec	4.00pm	Henson Park
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	v Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Sun 8 Dec	4.00pm	Lambert Park

TOP GOALSCORERS

- 2 – Rod Hutchinson (Penrith Panthers), Shane Knight (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Ante Moric (APIA-Leichhardt), Marko Pernovic (Belconnen Blue Devils).
- 1 – Adam Anderson (Parramatta Eagles), Robert Angievski (Fairfield Bulls), Zlatko Arambasic (APIA-Leichhardt), Ismael Arrarte (Fairfield Bulls), Bruno Beddoni (St. George), Daniel Borg (Parramatta Eagles), Jon-Paul Boutros (APIA-Leichhardt), Joe Bruni (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Mitchell Cook (Central Coast), Mark Falzon (Central Coast), Michael Hawrysiuk (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), George Issa (Bankstown City), Jason Lal (St. George), Jose Mendes (St. George), James Monie (Central Coast), Michael O'Riley (Canterbury-Marrickville), Alan Picken (Canterbury-Marrickville), Jason Sciberras (Penrith Panthers), Norman Tome (Bankstown City Lions), Luke Tomich (Fairfield Bulls), Simon Verreder (St. George)

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NSW Premier League

ROUND 3 PREVIEW


Belconnen Blue Devils
VS
St George Saints


Saturday 7th December, 2002 — 7.00pm
McKELLAR SOCCER CENTRE, MCKELLAR

Belconnen return home this week following an unlucky trip to Lambert Park having gone down by a single penalty goal at the hands of A.P.I.A.

The Blue Devils will be keen to register their first win of the new season in front of their home crowd at the McKellar Soccer Centre.

Coach Lino Fiorese will rely on the good form of Marko Perinovic, David Arranz and Daniel Macor to lead the Blue Devils to victory. Unfortunately the home team will be without the services of Oscar Zamora who was sent off for a second bookable offence the previous week.

The Saints will be riding high on confidence after their 3-0 victory over the more fancied Fairfield Bulls in round two.

Positive signs for the Saints are that striker Bruno Beddoni has recovered well from a groin injury and has found the back of the net again. Also Nick Bolantus will be available for selection following an impressive but-out in the Under 19's.

Coach Manny Spanoudakis will be well pleased with his team's defensive abilities keeping a clean sheet after conceding three goals in the opening round.

Vital to the strength of the Saints

defence is the form of former Young Socceroo Sebastian Sinozic who is adapting well to the rhythm and pace of the NSW Premier League. Hopefully the Saints will be with his services for as long as possible.

The trip down to Canberra is notoriously difficult, and therefore Belconnen will be favourites going into this game. In last years similar fixture, St George went down to the Blue Devils 3-2.

A big crowd is once again expected in the nation's capital for the locals to get behind their top male representative soccer team.


Penrith Panthers
VS
Blacktown City Demons


Saturday 7th December, 2002 — 7.00pm
ANDREWS ROAD FIELD, PENRITH

Who would have thought Penrith would be sitting equal top of the competition table and unbeaten after two rounds.

Coach Tony Rasmussen has the Panthers firing on all cylinders and with their team morale sky high, they are a very difficult side to beat at home.

Rod Hutchinson is their man most likely to cause problems. A former Demon junior he plays his best games against his old side and he'll be ably supported by Peter Bennett and Luke O'Connell, two other former Blacktown stars.

Blacktown's start to the year has been largely forgettable but they get their chance to atone this week. Patrick Gatt is in grave doubt with a rib injury while David Reid will be out suspended for the second consecutive week.

Paul Yates is the obvious choice to come in for Gatt having fully recovered from the knee problem that curtailed his contributions last season.

Blacktown do hold the whip hand over their western neighbours having beaten them in five of their six previous meetings.

One major concern Panthers is

health and well being of goalkeeper Chad Taylor who required stitches following a nasty head clash with Darren Borg. With Kurt Van Arkels and former Super League goalkeeper of the year Matthew Bloomfield waiting in the wings, the custodian position at the Panthers will not be a weakness.

Their form at Andrews Road Field is even better with three wins from three starts, but they will need to be at their absolute best if they are to make it four from four.

Expect the Demons to come out all guns blazing but don't expect a walk over.


Bankstown City Lions
VS
Central Coast Coasties


Saturday 7th December, 2002 — 7.00pm
JENSEN PARK, SEFTON

The game this Saturday night at Jensen Park looks a beauty.

This young Coast side has shown by its performance on the park as well as on the training field that it can be a real force to be reckoned with.

Since successful Under 19 coach John McLafferty assumed the mantle of first grade coach things have continued to go well, and the Coasties will look to consolidate here too.

Given their resilience they can really make Bankstown work hard to get back in a winning groove

and while the Coasties missed Pat Bradley badly last week they may elect not to make many changes to the team that started against Canterbury.

The form of youngster Marc Falzon, James Monie and Mitchell Cook have made many pundits eat their words after writing off the Coasties before the season started.

One problem that the Coasties will face this week is a lack of experience amongst their youthful line-up. They will need to show maturity beyond their years to match it with their hosts.

Bankstown looks good on paper

if they can field a fit side, but at the moment their depth looks suspect.

The work rated of George Issa, Norm Tonne, Raphael Bove will be the key to a Lions victory. Hopefully the Lions will see the return of class players such as Glenn Moore, Todd McManus, Elias Augennos, Rodney Madigan and Yane Talceviski before too long.

Another Coasties win could see them top of the table after three weeks and making yet another good start to the season, as is their habit. But a Bankstown win is the most likely result.


Fairfield Bulls
VS
Parramatta Eagles


Sunday 8th December, 2002 — 6.00pm
NINEVEH FIELD, EDENSOR PARK

Nineveh Field has seen some epic encounters and this should be no different.

Parramatta Eagles began the season in fine style with a win at Bankstown and will expect to carry on the good work against the Bulls.

Bulls coach Craig Sharpley faces a tough week on the training park in a bid to correct a number of his sides weaknesses ahead of a tough battle with last years champions Parramatta Eagles.

A shaky defence will need to be looked at with the injured Mitchell Daley likely to be replaced by

Jason Connolly. JC himself played his first game off the bench last week but still appears to be some weeks away from being fully fit. Luke Tomich who also missed the Bulls last game returns after a weeks holiday and could be another option for Sharpley.

Parramatta Eagles couldn't put the ball in the net last week against a plucky Penrith but after knocking over Bankstown in fine style in round one, they'll go into this game as the overwhelming favourites.

Striker Tim Gledhill is now fully recovered from a hamstring

problem and will be fit to play some part in the game, while Daniel Kukucka scored a good goal in the Eagles Under 19's to again press his claims. The Eagles may be without Daniel Borg who was hospitalised following a collision with Penrith Panthers goalkeeper Chad Taylor.

The Bulls have only ever beaten the Eagles once in six meetings during the regular season and that was way back in 1999. Don't expect that statistic to change too much with the visitors strongly tipped for the three points.


C/bury-M/ville Olympic
VS
Rockdale City Suns


Sunday 8th December, 2002 — 6.00pm
HENSON PARK, MARRICKVILLE

The Berries have started the new season in a positive fashion and remain solid in their first two starts.

Coach Greg Woodhouse is still tinkering with his squad with Akwesi Agyei making a strong club debut against the Coasties last weekend.

Playing a quick counterattacking style of game, the Suns defence is sure to get a good workout with the speedy Aheleas Kotospoulos and Agyei two players to watch.

Rockdale City are in a much less solid position after two losses from

their first two matches. In both games they conceded the winning goals deep into injury time and coach Bill Pilovski will need to work hard on his players concentration for the full ninety minutes to give them any hope in this one.

A few changes in their run on side could see Steve Dimitrevski and Vadim Mikoutski force their way in the starting eleven, along side Trent Worrall who returned after a broken thumb from the bench last weekend.

Rockdale are definitely a better team on paper than their bottom

position on the league ladder displays. With a wealth of talent and experience within their ranks, its only a matter of time before the Suns break their ducks and show the rest of the league that they deserve to be in the top competition in the state.

Both sides haven't met each other in top flight football since 1996 where the Suns came up trumps 2-0. They had won two of their past three meetings at Canterbury but expect enough from the home side to give them the edge in this.


A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers
VS
Bonnyrigg White Eagles


Sunday 8th December, 2002 — 6.00pm
LAMBERT PARK, MARION ST, LEICHHARDT

This weekends match of the round sees a second home game in two weeks for the new-look A.P.I.A. up against a resurgent Bonnyrigg who will be looking to maintain their unbeaten record thus far.

A P.I.A., for all their talent, still look unconvincing at Lambert Park. There was nothing wrong with their away form last term, but having locked off with a 1-0 win last weekend, perhaps they can make Bonnyrigg their next victims?

Tony Tesoro, such an integral

part of the defence these days will be missing after getting carded twice against Belconnen, but the Tigers do have good back up.

Tigers coach, Les De Celis is doing a good job of getting his team of champion players to play as a champion team. As the rounds continue, the Tigers will improve exponentially.

Bonnyrigg have done well on this ground before so supporters can expect a tight and exciting contest. Both sides, like several now in the Premier League after just two rounds, have four points and

already no side can claim two wins out of two. The White Eagles were without Michael Hawrysiuk against Rockdale but hopefully he will be back for the round three clash.

It is looking like a very closely fought little race this season and both these sides will want to be up there fighting for honours as they were last season.

A.P.I.A. will have the edge and could be ready to at least put home ground familiarity to some advantage after so many ship ups in past seasons at Lambert Park.

Women's National Soccer League

NSW SAPPHIRES2

(Louisa Bisby (og) 28', Michelle Carney 30')

VICTORIA VISION0

at Bob Jane Stadium, Melbourne

SAPPHIRES SECURE FINALS BERTH

The NSW Sapphires confirmed a position in this year's grand final against the Queensland Sting after defeating the Victoria Vision 2-0 at a cold and windy Bob Jane Stadium on Saturday afternoon.

With a little luck and dash of good fortune added to fixture, the Sapphires never looked in danger and were in complete control from the first whistle.

NSW went into the game without seasoned defender Lisa Warrenner who had to pull out late through a knee injury and fellow defender Kathryn Collins. As a result, current Matilda, Thea Slatyer, was brought into in the starting eleven and ably filled the position of left back whilst Lisa Gilbert took up the right back role without any worry. Nicole Kimber enjoyed a welcomed call up to the midfield whilst Catherine Cannuli and Danielle Small lead the attack up front.

Shortly after the commencement of the game, the Sapphires had a major scare when their goalkeeper, Cassie Kell, came out for a ball and suffered a heavy knock to her ankle courtesy of sliding Victorian attacker, Leigh Terek. Travelling without reserve goalkeeper, Dimitra Polous, a few anxious moments ensued when the players and coach began considering which player would take up the role between the posts. Fortunately for the NSW squad, Kell shook off the injury and continued on with the game.

The Sapphires controlled the opening period of the game with some fine football, and were unlucky to go ahead early in the proceedings

when NSW captain, Taryn Rockall drove a shot from the right-hand edge of the penalty box which cannoned off the left upright. Unfortunately Catherine Cannuli was unable to capitalise on the rebound.

The break through for NSW came in the 28th minute following some good lead-up work on the left side when Thea Slatyer took some space and lofted a pass to Rockall in the penalty area. Victoria's Louisa Bisby attempted to intercept the waist high ball, but in doing so only got a toe onto it and chipped over a hapless Melissa Barbieri in the Vision goal.

Two minutes after the own-goal, NSW were back on the attack with Jo Burgess on the right of midfield beating her defender and again spotting Rockall around the penalty spot. The ensuing cross skidded past the NSW captain and evaded the Vision defence, only to land at the feet of an unmarked Michelle Carney at the far post who calmly controlled and slotted the ball underneath the diving Barbieri to score her team's second goal. For the remainder of the half, the Sapphires controlled the play.

At half-time, the Sapphires replaced Catherine Cannuli, who had sustained a hit to the head late in the first half, with Sarah Walsh. The second period began with NSW continuing to apply the pressure, whilst searching for a third goal to seal the result. Kylie Ledbrook came close with a diving header, whilst Nicole Kimber had a few unsuccessful opportunities from long range.

The Victorian's tried valiantly to bridge the deficit by looking to release an in-form Louisa Bisby, but it was Sarah Fitzgerald who came closest when she split the NSW midfield requiring the defence to commit. The ensuing shot by Fitzgerald from outside the box was easily accounted for by Kell and any chance of a fight back averted.



Michelle Carney

After the match, Taryn Rockall was satisfied with her team's performance on the day.

"Our goal at the start of the season was to make the final, and know that has been assured, it's one less thing to worry about," said Rockall.

"Now we're really looking forward to playing our traditional rivals, Northern NSW next week in Newcastle. It's definitely a case of unfinished business for us after drawing with them in round five, so we'd really like to prove that was are the top NSW team going into the finals weekend," concluded Rockall.

VICTORIA VISION:

20 Melissa Barbieri 5. Jenny Black (Muehler 76) 7. Sarah Fitzgerald 8. Georgia Koutrouvelis (Groenewald 35) 9. Leigh Terek Thornton 53 10. Jessica Humble 12. Louisa Bisby 13. Janara Maza (T. Andis 84) 17. Lauren Farrugia 21. Katrina Smith (Skware 63) 22. Rachel Lamb

Substitutes:

2. Kim Mueller 4. Sarah Groenewald 11. Amy Skvarc 19. Andrea Totsidis 24. Meagan Thornton

Yellow Cards: Leigh Terek 50'

NSW SAPPHIRES:

1. Cassie Kell 6. Anissa Tann 2. Thea Slatyer 5. Lisa Gilbert 11. Michelle Carney 7. Kylie Ledbrook 14. Nicole Kimber 10. Taryn Rockall 8. Jo Burgess 13. Catherine Cannuli (Walsh 46) 18. Danielle Small

Substitutes:

17. Leah Blayney 19. Sarah Walsh 20. Hayley Todd

Yellow Cards: Thea Slatyer 77'

Referee: Elizabeth Mast

Assistant Referee: John Anastasiou and Anthony Siders

Fourth Official: Josip Paulus

WNSL MATCH REPORTS

By Janene Mar

GRANDFINALISTS DECIDED

Queensland Sting and NSW Sapphires are confirmed as WNSL grandfinalists after the completion of Round Nine action Saturday night, the championship match to be played on Saturday 14 December. The pair shook off the challenge of both Canberra Eclipse and Adelaide Sensation by both winning on the weekend and opening up an unassailable lead.

The one matter to be confirmed in this week's last round being first position on points and with it the right to host the championship decider, although Queensland sit in the box seat. For it to shift south to Sydney, Sting would have to lose this Saturday against last-placed Victoria Vision, and the Sapphires would need a big-goal win over Northern NSW Pride.

QUEENSLAND STING2

(Belinda Dawney 39m, Jessica Mitchell 90m)

CANBERRA ECLIPSE1

(Rhian Davies 89m)

at Carmichael Park, Brisbane

Queensland Sting however, had to endure a dramatic end to their game before they could celebrate the 2-1 win over grandfinal hopes Canberra Eclipse in Brisbane.

The home side conceded a late equaliser, but were able to produce a winning goal shortly after. It was a deserved win after a first half where they could have sealed the win from some great chances against a must-

win Canberra which had little in response in attack

Sting were lively from the opening whistle and hungry for goals. Regular chances throughout the first half however only resulted in a fantastic display by Canberra keeper Amy Beattie, herself a Sting player last season. In the 39th minute, Queensland opened their account when Lana Harch provided a menacing cross. The ball was punched out by Beattie only to fall nicely for Belinda Dawney who cracked it home without hesitation.

Queensland were less dominant in the second half but remained in control. Eclipse, made a last ditch effort to rescue their season and, after creating few open chances on goal previously, were then gifted an equaliser in the 89th minute, Rhian Davies allowed a free run on goal after the Sting defence lost the ball. Canberra suddenly smelt a sniff of a last-gasp victory, but their hopes were dashed in the following minute. A Sting cross from the right was missed by the Eclipse keeper, and fell right in the path of substitute Jessica Mitchell for the simplest of tap-ins and home town celebrations all round at the final whistle soon after

Sting - Nichols, Garven, Reuter, Grant, McShea, Garriock, Mann, Duus, Harch, Thomas (Hohnke 80), Dawney (Mitchell 67).

Eclipse - Beattie, Swaffer, Borucinski, Taylor, Davies, Wainwright, P Hepperlin, Karp, Rukavina (Parker 79), Wilson, David (Brew 65).

ADELAIDE SENSATION2

(Vicki Balomenos 61m, Lisa De Vanna 87m)

NORTHERN NSW PRIDE 3

(Katie Gill 22m, Ashley Wilson 37m)

at Marden Sports Complex, Adelaide

Adelaide Sensation fought back from a two-goal half-time deficit and snatched a late equaliser to draw 2-2 with Northern NSW Pride on

Saturday in Adelaide. Northern NSW had the better of the game until the last twenty minutes and were disappointed to see a rare victory slip away in the dying minutes. Sensation needed to win this game to possibly stay in the hunt for a grandfinal berth. Each side was missing a player through suspension, Adelaide's Stacey Stocco and Northern's Tracy Baker, whilst Adelaide was still missing Cheryl Salisbury

League top scorer Lisa De Vanna almost gave Adelaide the lead in the 15th minute, but her shot was cleared off the line by defender Harmonie Attwill. Yet the first half belonged to visitors Pride, and they opened the scoring midway through, Katie Gill sidefooting from the six-yard box a Tara McMinn cross. Northern were unlucky on several occasions against Sensation's square backline before adding their second eight minutes before the break, Ashley Wilson released with a through ball and placing it past the keeper

Pride remained the stronger side for the first period of the second half but were unable to add to their tally. In their must-win game, Sensation finally made a late surge in search of goals. The home side pulled one back in the 61st minute after the opposition defence lost out to the lightning fast De Vanna closing down the loose ball between defender and goalkeeper. The keeper's attempt to clear ricocheted off the body of De Vanna and fell into the path of Vicki Balomenos for an easy finish.

With three minutes remaining, Adelaide levelled the scores, Leanne Slater feeding the ball to De Vanna whose shot escaped the clutches of the keeper for her ninth goal of the season but it was a case of too little too late for the Sensation.

Sensation - Trimboli, May, Katanos, Benoist (Burgess 67), Slater, Madden, Harrison, Blacker (Walsh 56), Hodge, Balomenos (Sabjak 81), De Vanna.

Pride - Hunter, Dunne, Alley, Shepherd (Cotts 56), Altwill, Crawford, Amber Neilson, Colthorpe, McMinn, Gill, Wilson.

WNSL TABLE AFTER ROUND 9

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
QUEENSLAND STING	9	7	-	2	23	7	16	21
NSW SAPPHIRES	9	5	3	1	17	9	8	18
CANBERRA ECLIPSE	9	3	4	2	12	8	4	13
ADELAIDE SENSATION	9	3	3	3	14	18	-4	12
NORTHERN NSW PRIDE	9	2	1	6	13	24	-11	7
VICTORIA VISION	9	1	1	7	5	18	-13	4

LEADING GOALSCORERS 2002/03 (As at End of Round Nine)

x	Lisa DE VANNA	(Adelaide Sensation)
9	Lisa DE VANNA	(Adelaide Sensation)
5	Kate McSHEA	(Queensland Sting)
4	Taryn ROCKALL	(NSW Sapphires)
4	Katie GILL	(Northern NSW Pride)
3	Natalie THOMAS (Queensland Sting), Amber NEILSON (Northern NSW Pride), Tal KARP (Canberra Eclipse), April MANN (Queensland Sting), Ashley WILSON (Northern NSW Pride), Belinda DAWNEY (Queensland Sting)	

ROUND TEN

Saturday 7 December	Adelaide Sensation v Canberra Eclipse	Kick-Off 6.00pm
	Marden Sports Complex, Adelaide	
Saturday 7 December	Queensland Sting v Victoria Vision	Kick-Off 5.30pm
	Gold Park, Toowoomba	
Saturday 7 December	Northern NSW Pride v NSW Sapphires	Kick Off 6.30pm
	Jack McLaughlan Oval, Newcastle	

NSW Soccer Federation

J-P's Coaching Tips

Hi Everyone,

Last weekend saw the end of a very busy month for the coaching and development department with both a Youth Coaching Course (66 participants) and a Senior Coaching Course (70 participants) conducted on each weekend.

Anyone would like to be a coach has a responsible to get much knowledge as possible, regardless of what level they wish to coach at from the local U6's to National Soccer League.

With this knowledge your players will received good important which will improved their game and also their enjoyment.

With knowledge also comes with respect. If as a coach you can impart the knowledge to your players in an easy to understand manner, you will earn their respect. When you have the respect of the players, the team will work together better.

The need to accredit coaches is also an important part in the development of soccer in this country. With the fear of litigation in all parts of society, the sport's governing bodies have a responsibility to our players, young and old to provide coaches who are trained in the latest coaching methods

One of the most heartening things to see from the most recent Senior Licence was the presence of former elite players who are making the

transition to the coaching ranks.

Of particular note was the presence of former Socceroo captain, Paul Wade, former NSL players, Velimir Kupresak, Walter Ardone, Aytek Genc, David Skeen, Cynile Ndonga-Kelr as well as others such as John McKie, Les de Celis, Cliff Pointer and many others.

What's great about this is that these people who have played at an elite level can then share their ideas and experiences with other coaches who may not have played any higher than their local club.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the work of the instructors. For any coaching course to be successful you need quality instructors to lift coaches to the next level. Fortunately we had three of the best in Norm Boardman, Richard Evans and Keith Healey.

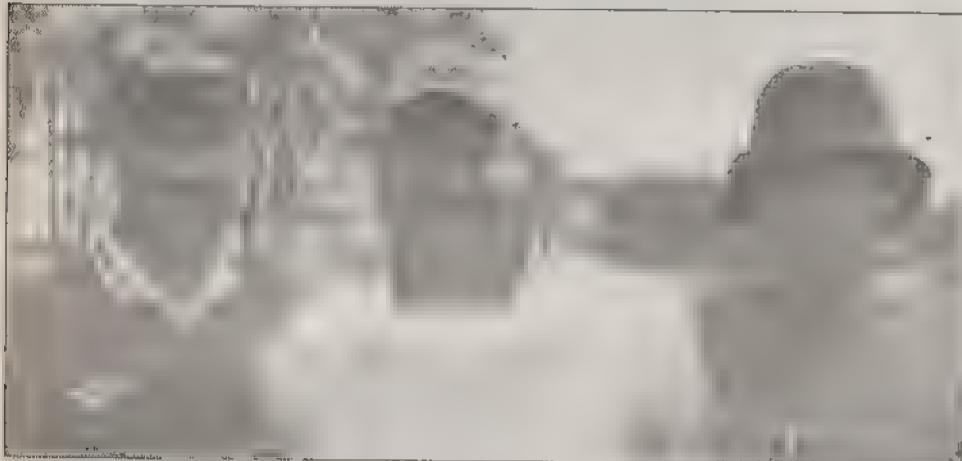
For more information about future coaching courses, contact the NSW Soccer Federation by e-mail (nscia@soccernsw.com.au) or phone (02) 9629 1800.

*That's all for this week,
Until next week,
Happy Coaching*

Jean-Paul de Marigny
Coaching and Development Manager
NSW Soccer Federation



Norm Boardman (standing far right), and his coaching pupils.



Former Socceroo captain Paul Wade (left), Adam Mark (centre), Walter Ardone (right).



Another happy group of coaching graduates.

DECLARATION OF LEAGUES WINTER SEASON 2003

At the Board of Directors meeting held recently the composition of all divisions of State League Football for the 2003 Winter Season was considered and I have pleasure in advising the determination as follows:-

SUPER LEAGUE

AC United
Dulwich Hill
Fraser Park Jets
Hajduk Wanderers
Hurstville City Crescent Star
Hurstville City Minotaurs
Macarthur Rams
Manly Warringah Dolphins
MSC Liverpool
Ryde City
Stanmore Hawks
Sydney University
Sutherland Sharks

DIVISION ONE

Bathurst '75
Belmore Hercules
Hills United
Hurstville ZSC
Liverpool Bossy
Mt Druitt Town
Mt Pritchard
Nepean Association
Northern Tigers
Schofields Scorpions
Wanderers Cedars
Western Rage
White City
Wollongong United
(formerly Illawarra Lions)

DIVISION TWO

Auburn Star
Blacktown Association
Camden Tigers
Greenisland
Greystanes
Hakoah
Hawkesbury City
Holy Cross Ryde
Mingara Lakers
Parramatta City
Sporting SCC
Springwood
UNSW
Western Red Devils

DIVISION THREE

Birchgrove United
Colo Colo
East Coast Magic
Gladesville United
Inter Lions
Kellyville Kolts
Kosciuszko
Lithgow Workmen
Prospect United
Roosters Football Club
Southern Star Sharks
Trasandinos
UTS
West Sydney Passion

WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE

Bathurst City Panthers
Gladesville Ravens
Macarthur Rams
Manly Warringah
Marconi
Mingara Lakers
Nepean Association
Northern NSW Academy
NSW Academy
North West Sydney Koalas
Olympic Sharks
Wollongong Wolves

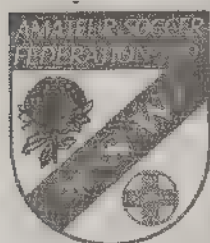
WOMEN'S STATE LEAGUE

Granville Association
Roselands Raptors
Schofields Scorpions
St George Association
Sydney University
UNSW
UTS
UWS Wolves

In consideration of the establishment of divisional structures with an equal number of clubs it has been resolved that Winter Divisions for Season 2003 will be based on a fourteen (14) team competition. The review of leagues will be on-going on an annual basis and in keeping with Unification of the code.

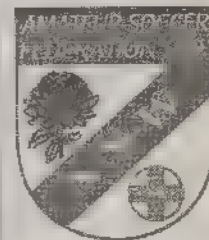
Entry to both Leagues is dependent upon the criteria relating to the NSW Soccer Federation competitions being met by each club.

ROBERT WADDELL,
Chief Executive Officer,
NSW Soccer Federation.



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WHY SHOULD THE BOYS HAVE ALL THE FUN

Girls Soccer Program 2003

New South Wales Amateur Soccer Federation (NSWASF) conducts a Primary & High Schools Girls Soccer Program, called 'Why Should the Boys Have All the Fun?'

The aim of the program is to expose girls to the world's no.1 game - SOCCER, encouraging them to have fun; play for their school team or their local Club.

We primarily target girls from Years 3-6, but have recently expanded to High Schools through school visits. The basic techniques of passing, receiving, dribbling, shielding, defending, striking, finishing, heading, throw-ins and goalkeeping are incorporated in fun skills activities and games.

The program is structured to run over 2-3 visits with sessions from 45-60 minutes and with a maximum

of 30 girls per session

For the girls to have a real taste of soccer, it's best the same girls are involved in our return visits.

So why not book our experienced coaches for a whole day or half a day or during PE or sports time!

Each participating school will receive our new Teachers/Coaches Soccer Skills & Games Manual as resource for your PDHPE/Sports Program.

Each girl will receive a 'Soccer Show Bag,' containing a soccer skills booklet; posters; stickers; tattoos and a drink bottle.

The warm spring weather has not deterred primary schools from participating in our 'Why Should the Boys Have All the Fun?' Girls Soccer Program.

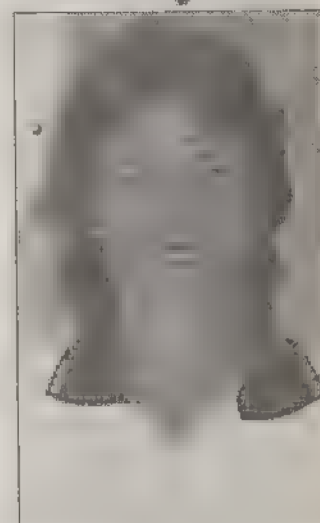
Lower Blue Mountains primary schools - Bligh Park, Braddock,

Katoomba and Leura have taken up the offer to have Taryn Rockall, a current NSW Sapphires player and Matilda, and Joann Boyd, former NSW State player come and coach the girls in soccer skills and fun games, giving them an opportunity to experience the world game.

Visits to Stella Maris College, Manly; Kent Road PS, North Ryde; Epping PS; Our Lady of Lebanon, Harris Park; Colo Vale PS; and St Patrick's Primary, East Gosford will also take place during term 4.

If your school would like to participate in our Girls Soccer Program next year (at no cost), please complete the form found on our website: www.nswasf.com.au and return to me before the end of the school year. The program is run all year round.

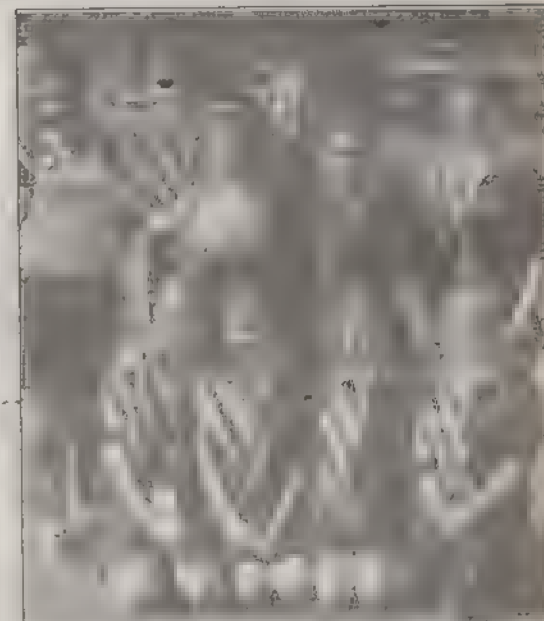
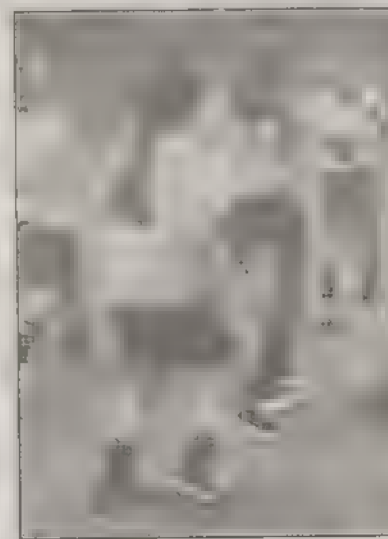
If you wish to discuss the program in more detail, please do not hesitate



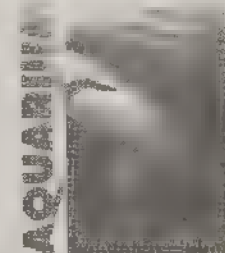
Sharon Dewar, Womens Soccer Coordinator.

to contact me via e-mail to: womens@nswasf.com.au or phone me on (02) 9629 2833.

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ITALIAN SERIE A

ITALIAN AFFAIR

By Joe Russo

Roma and Lazio are always bitter rivals. The local derby between these two teams is always a fiercely contested game. This season the Round 7 clash between them finished up as a two-all draw.

In the last few weeks these two teams seem to be at opposite ends of the spectrum. After Round 11 Lazio sit comfortably in third place while Roma languishes in the middle of the table.

Roma's last win in the Serie A was back in Round 6 against Empoli.

Last week at the Olympic Stadium in Rome, Arsenal thoroughly outplayed Roma in their Champions League clash. Thierry Henry's hat-trick triggered off some very dramatic scenes in the Roma dressing rooms.

Roma were coming off a three-nil weekend loss to Parma and the Arsenal game only compounded their problems.

According to reports there are some players who no longer see eye-to-eye with coach Fabio Capello.

After the Arsenal game apparently Fuser, Tomic and Batistuta were the players that argued heatedly with Capello.

Those three were on the bench and, according to reports, Capello the next morning at training addressed only the players that took the field.

Capello is alleged to have discussed Roma's poor recent form and mentioned that there were no alternative players available.

Tomic, Fuser, Sartor, Guardiolari and Bombardini were left to train on their own while Capello addressed the rest of the team. Batistuta, who is regularly on the bench, is accused of working against Capello and creating trouble within the team.

So it seems that it is a real mess at Roma and a long way from their Serie A league title (Scudetto) success only 18 months ago.

Meanwhile at Lazio things have turned the corner for the better. The team off the park is still experiencing financial woes but on it are performing superbly.

Under coach Roberto Mancini, a former great player and Sven Goran Eriksson's assistant in 2000 when they won the Scudetto, the team is playing very well indeed.

Last week, the so-called 'Lazio B' team thoroughly outplayed Sturm Graz of Austria in Vienna in the third round of the UEFA Cup.

The three-one win virtually guarantees them passage to the fourth round of the UEFA Cup. It isn't bad when Simone Inzaghi and Enrico Chiesa, both former Italian internationals, make up the striking partnership up front yet they are considered to be part of the B team.

Up until Round 11 Lazio had only lost one game in the Serie A and that was way back on the opening day against Chievo in mid September.

Their next two games are against Inter at home and Juventus away and this should really prove to be their true test of character.

In fact this weekend in Round 13 it is the battle of the cities: Rome v Milan. Both these cities claim to be the most important one in Italy, similarly to the rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne in Australia.

At the Olympic Stadium in Rome it is Lazio v Inter while at the San Siro AC Milan takes on Roma. Throughout the late 80's and early to mid 90's, Milan was definitely the dominant city.

Supremacy seemed to shift to the capital in recent years with the success of Lazio in 2000 and Roma the following year. However, it is fairly obvious that the stylish city of Milan is currently back on top.

Last week's Champions League results were a mixed bag for the Italian teams but on the whole they were more positive than negative.

Besides Roma's poor home showing against Arsenal, Juventus managed to equalise away in Spain to Deportivo La Coruna. AC Milan had a narrow home victory over Real Madrid and Inter were far too good for Newcastle Utd at St James' Park.

No matter what happens from here on in, it is still a good European season for Italian teams. Throughout the 90's Italian teams ruled in Europe but in recent years they have been very ordinary. This year is would appear that they are starting to turn it around and all four teams are far from finished in the Champions League.



Andriy Shevchenko moves in on the Empoli goal.

ROMA 2 JUVENTUS 2

Juventus missed the chance to return to the top just hours later despite fighting back to earn a draw in a fiery contest against Roma.

Pavel Nedved claimed a point for the Bianconeri with an 85th-minute strike but the game spilled over as Roma's Vincent Candela and Francesco Totti, along with Juve's Alessandro Birindelli, all received their marching orders shortly after.

Skipper Totti had given Fabio Capello's men the lead in the 12th minute and Antonio Cassano doubled the advantage on 44 before Alessandro Del Piero sparked the fightback a minute later.

EMPOLI 1 AC MILAN 1

Ukrainian star Andriy Shevchenko followed up his Champions League heroics by salvaging a draw for AC Milan at Empoli.

Tommaso Rocchi gave the home side a shock lead in the 43rd minute.

But Shevchenko, whose goal sank European Champions Real Madrid in midweek, popped up six minutes after half-time to restore parity.

PIACENZA 2 LAZIO 3

Bernardo Corradi struck a last-minute winner as Lazio recovered from two goals down to snatch a 3-2 victory at Piacenza.

The Roman side arrived at the Leonardo Garilli stadium on the back of an unbeaten streak extending

back to September 14 but that looked under threat when Enzo Maresca scored for Piacenza in the 17th minute and Nicola Caccia doubled the lead nine minutes later.

But Diego Simeone made it 2-1 three minutes before the break, Claudio Lopez equalised on the stroke of half-time and Corradi popped up in the 90th minute to claim all three points.

INTER MILAN 4 BRESCIA 0

Inter Milan confirmed they have overcome the trauma of last week's derby defeat by disposing of Brescia 4-0 at the San Siro, thanks to four goals from Christian Vieri.

Inter wasted little time staking their claim to the points, with Vieri striking in the third and 12th minutes.

It was hardly the start Brescia wanted to a nightmare run of fixtures, which sees them pitted against Juventus, AC Milan, Lazio and Parma in the coming weeks and things got worse when Vieri bagged another two in the 57th and 83rd minutes.

TORINO 0 PARMA 4

Parma cruised to an emphatic 4-0 win at Torino to plunge their relegation-haunted hosts further into trouble.

Torino came into the game still smarting from a fans' takeover of their club offices to complain about the club's dismal record of two wins from nine games, but within 16 minutes against Parma those fans would have been even more unhappy.

With just over a quarter of an hour gone, Matteo Brighi opened the scoring for the Gialloblu and nine minutes later Adrian Mutu made it 2-0.

Within five minutes of half-time Brazilian striker Adriano increased the lead to 3-0 and then added his second and Parma's fourth to wrap up the 4-0 win.

BOLOGNA 3 MODENA 0

Bologna took the spoils in their derby clash with Modena after a convincing victory at the Renato Dall'Ara stadium.

The crowd were shocked before the match when one Modena fan seriously

injured himself by falling from a stand, landing in a ditch at pitchside.

And strikes from Tomas Locatelli in the 56th minute, Julio Cruz in the 80th and Christian Amoroso in the 81st ensured that none of the visiting supporters went home happy.

ATALANTA 0 PERUGIA 2

Perugia secured their first victory in Bergamo since 1978 with a fine performance at the Atleti Azzurri d'Italia stadium to defeat struggling Atalanta 2-0.

Fabrizio Miccoli put the visitors ahead after 20 minutes and Massimiliano Fusani sealed the win 10 minutes from the end.

REGGINA 1 CHIEVO 1

Reggina maintained their unbeaten record against Chievo despite conceding a second-half equaliser to the Veronese side.

Chievo have enjoyed a better league placing over the last two seasons but have never beaten their hosts.

And the odds were always against them after Japanese international Shunsuke Nakamura had put Reggina ahead from the penalty spot in the 23rd minute.

Chievo pulled a goal back through Nicola Legrottaglie but could not find the winner.

FIXTURES

Saturday 7 December

AC Milan v Roma

Lazio v Inter Milan

Sunday 8 December

Brescia v Juventus

Modena v Como

Parma v Reggina

Perugia v Piacenza

Torino v Atalanta

Udinese v Empoli

Chievo v Bologna

Reggina 1 - 1 Chievo, Atalanta 0 - 2 Perugia, Bologna 3 - 0 Modena, Empoli 1 - 1 AC Milan, Inter Milan 4 - 0 Brescia, Piacenza 2 - 3 Lazio, Torino 0 - 4 Parma, AS Roma 2 - 2 Juventus.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Lazio	12	8	3	1	25	10	27
2. Milan	12	8	2	2	27	9	26
3. Inter	12	8	2	2	25	12	26
4. Juventus	12	7	5	0	21	8	26
5. Chievo	12	7	1	4	21	13	22
6. Bologna	12	6	4	2	16	9	22
7. Parma	12	5	4	3	22	14	19
8. Modena	12	6	0	6	11	19	18
9. Roma	12	4	5	3	23	21	17
10. Empoli	12	5	2	5	19	17	17
11. Perugia	12	5	2	5	17	19	17
12. Udinese	11	4	3	4	9	12	15
13. Piacenza	12	3	2	7	11	17	11
14. Brescia	12	2	3	7	14	25	9
15. Atalanta	12	2	2	8	11	23	8
16. Reggina	12	1	4	7	10	21	7
17. Torino	12	2	0	10	6	26	6
18. Como	11	0	4	7	6	19	4



Francesco Totti fires home against Juventus.

ENGLISH

An English Odyssey

By Stuart Jones

Welcome Back to another week of footy news from England. Alex Ferguson has hinted at fresh blood when the transfer window opens up in the northern winter. He has also suggested that he may well stay on for three more years after his current contract runs out at the end of next year.

Ferguson has said he has built three United teams in his time and perhaps now it is time to build a fourth.

David Beckham has slammed an internet website for starting false rumours about him and his family that have been propagated throughout the UK via the web. Publications have been put on notice that should it be published legal action would be initiated.

Manchester United and the English FA are currently being investigated by the Office of Fair Trading after claims of price fixing of replica kits. Seven retailers, Umbro, the FA and United all have until the end of January to respond to the claims before a decision on the matter is made in the UK spring.

Rumours this week that Francis Jeffers was on his way out of Highbury in the next transfer window. However Jeffers looks likely to choose the Arsenal reserve team rather than moving on. After all most of the team who play for the club that approached Jeffers probably chase the autographs of the Arsenal reserves. Tottenham have now denied they made enquiries re Jeffers.

Meanwhile Les Ferdinand will be leaving Spurs after criticising Glenn Hoddle on his personal website after Hoddle refused a loan move to Wolves. Even though it may be his final year as a professional, Ferdinand looks set to join Wolverhampton in January.

A club in financial crisis once again is York City. The players were informed this week by Chairman John Batchelor that they would not be being paid for a month. Former Carlisle star and current York City defender, Darren Edmondson has stated the obvious in expressing the disappointment of the players, especially coming up to Christmas.

Derby County still have financial problems of their own and they have released two players to relieve the wage bill. Brian O'Neil and Michael McArdle are to leave the club. The Rams have also settled with Hossain Carbonari and Bjorn Otto Bragstad. It is reported Derby are 30 million pounds in the red.

Middlesbrough this week have been given the green light to make a compensation claim against Liverpool for the transfer of Christian Ziege in August 2000. Chairman Steve Gibson now says the club will go for what he sees as rightfully theirs and will be seeking big compensation from both Liverpool and Ziege.

Joe Kinnear is in strife this week after being reported to the FA this week. Some quarters have claimed Kinnear shoved Ian Holloway in the chest after a 0-0 draw between Luton and QPR that saw two Luton players sent off. Both clubs have been asked to file a report after the incident was mentioned in the referees report.

Burton Albion came within a penalty of tumbling Oldham out of the FA Cup. In the replay the match was 1-1 after full time and 2-2 after extra time (that it been golden goal Albion would have won). Stuart Reddington hit the bar with his sudden death penalty and Oldham's Carlo Corazzini scored his to see Oldham through 5-4 on penalties.

Cambridge and Cardiff both won their replays 2-1 (over Scarborough and Tranmere respectively) as did Exeter and Southend (over Forest Green and Hartlepool). Rushden and Diamonds and York also won by the same scoreline (over Kidderminster and Swansea). So of ten matches played on November 26 in the cup six finished 2-1.

Crawley defeated Tiverton 3-2, having trailed 0-2, whilst Bristol Rovers ended the run of Runcorn with a 3-1 away victory. The upsets were at Hartsdown Park where Margate defeated Leyton Orient 1-0 and at Loftus Road where Vauxhall Motors held QPR to a 1-1 draw, both goal coming in the opening 22 minutes of the match. In the penalty shoot out Motors came out 4-3 on top to progress to the second round proper.

Rochdale manager Paul Simpson is looking to extend Australian Shane Cansdell-Sernif's loan period. Scotland.

Finally in the battle for the relegation spot out of the league Swansea stays bottom of Division Three with 15 points with Boston ahead on goal difference alone. Exeter, Bristol Rovers and Carlisle are just a win away though, with Carlisle and Swansea both suffering the worst goal differences.

Yeovil remain top of the Conference. There is only one team to go up or down (depending on ground requirements) after last season the league rejected a proposal to expand this number to at least two (it had been proposed for a play off system for teams 2-5 in the conference).

Until next week enjoy your footy, well enjoy it in England anyway while the Australian game implodes yet again.

Diego Forlan scored both goals as Manchester United roared back into title contention with a 2-1 win at Liverpool on Sunday.

The much-maligned Uruguayan striker struck twice in three second-half minutes to stun the Anfield faithful, the first after a horrendous error by Liverpool keeper Jerzy Dudek. Sami Hyypia pulled a goal back eight minutes from time for the home side, but it was too little too late, Liverpool dominated the opening period, but went behind in bizarre circumstances after 64 minutes.

Jamie Carragher headed a routine backpass to Dudek from just inside his own area, but somehow the Pole allowed it to squirm from his grasp.

And there was Forlan on the spot to calmly slot the ball into an empty net.

If that goal came as a surprise to the travelling fans, they were in dreamland three minutes later. Ryan Giggs played a through ball that Hyypia failed to cut out and Forlan was in on goal on the right flank. And with his confidence high the striker drilled a right-footed strike past Dudek to make it 2-0.

Liverpool tried desperately to get back into the game, and pulled a goal back eight minutes from time.

United failed to clear the ball after a goalmouth scramble, and Hyypia blasted it past Fabien Barthez with his left foot.

A couple of minutes later Barthez had to make a brilliant save to keep the visitors in front, somehow tipping over a 25-yard blockbuster from Dietmar Hamann.

Then Liverpool had a great chance to save a point in injury time as Michael Owen found Steven Gerrard in a great position just inside the United box.

But he shot wildly across goal inside of finding the net.

And that was the last opportunity for the home side, as United notched a crucial win to end a run of five straight defeats in this fixture. The pressure on under-fire Leeds boss Terry Venables intensified as his side suffered a shock 2-1 home defeat by Charlton.

All appeared to be going well for the Whites when Aussie Harry Kewell smashed home a beauty to give them the lead three minutes before half-time.

But Kevin Lisbie levelled 10 minutes from the end as nerves began to creep in for the home side. And after bringing on Robbie Fowler and Michael Bridges in a bid to grab the winner, Leeds were then hit by a last-ditch sucker punch. Scott Parker was the hero for the Addicks, netting in injury time to wrap up a famous win for Alan Curbishley's men.

A stunning goal from Alan Shearer inspired Newcastle to an amazing last-gasp 2-1 victory over Everton at St James' Park. The Toffees had looked on course for their sixth successive 1-0 victory in the Premiership after Kevin Campbell took advantage of some hesitant defending from the home side to put them in front after 17 minutes.

They even overcame the sending off of defender Joseph Yobo soon after for a professional foul on Craig Bellamy, producing a spirited rearguard action to repel whatever Newcastle threw at them.

But with just four minutes of the match to go former England striker Shearer unleashed an unstoppable 30 yard volley that flew into the top corner.

Everton keeper Richard Wright may have been unable to do anything about that strike but he was at fault in the dying moments when Bellamy's deflected shot somehow found a way past him and into



Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink of Chelsea scores their third goal during the Barclays Premiership match between Chelsea and Sunderland at Stamford Bridge.

the net. It was harsh on Everton who had withstood massive pressure but the failure to take the points denied them the chance of moving above arch rivals Liverpool and into second place in the table.

Thierry Henry followed up his hat-trick heroics against Roma in midweek with a double for Arsenal in a 3-1 win over Aston Villa, which extended their lead over second-placed Liverpool.

Robert Pires' 17th minute opener ensured Arsenal extended their scoring run to 55 consecutive games.

The Frenchman slid the ball past Villa goalkeeper Peter Enckelman after Dennis Bergkamp had found him with a clever through-ball. Henry then repeated his set-piece exploits of midweek as he curled a free-kick into the top corner four minutes into the second half.

German midfielder Tomas Hitzlsperger rattled in a left-foot shot in the 64th minute to bring Graham Taylor's side back into contention.

However it was Henry who had the final word as he stroked home a penalty with eight minutes left.

Chelsea moved into the top three following their 3-0 win over Sunderland.

The opening goal was scored by French defender William Gallas in the 58th minute as he arrived at the far post to volley home.

His compatriot and central defensive partner Marcel Desailly grabbed a rare goal and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink added another to seal the win and force Sunderland into the relegation places.

West Brom were the ones to climb out of the drop zone as they upset Middlesbrough 1-0 at The Hawthorns.

Transfer-listed striker Danny Dichio scored the only goal of the game in the 72nd minute. Tottenham failed to take advantage of Boro's slip-up as they were held 1-1 at Birmingham.

City goalkeeper Nico Vaesen failed to deal with Christian Ziege's cross from the left and the loose ball fell to Teddy Sheringham, who made no mistake in the 55th minute.

But the Blues hit back 13 minutes later when full-back Jeff Kenna netted his first goal of the season.

Blackburn beat Fulham 2-1 at Ewood Park as they ended a run of three straight defeats. Striker Dwight Yorke netted his fourth goal of the season in the 35th minute, tucking the ball past Edwin van der Sar after good work between David Dunn and Damien Duff.

But Rovers couldn't hold on and striker Steve Marlet fired in an equaliser on the hour mark for the Cottagers. Blackburn goalkeeper Brad Friedel's excellent season continued as he saved a penalty from Marlet six minutes later after Craig Short brought down Luis Boa Morte. That save proved crucial as Rovers restored their advantage in the 77th minute with a bizarre goal.

Yorke's goalward header was cleared but ricocheted back into the net off unfortunate Fulham defender Rufus Brevett.

In a relegation six-pointer, Manchester City defeated Bolton 2-0 at Maine Road. Steve Howey's first goal of the season gave the hosts the lead after 25 minutes as he headed home following a corner on the left.

Eyal Berkovic added a second in the 56th minute to increase City's advantage and heap further pressure on Sam Allardyce's strugglers.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal 3 - 1 Aston Villa, Birmingham C. 1 - 1 Tottenham H., Blackburn R. 2 - 1 Fulham, Chelsea 3 - 0 Sunderland, Manchester C. 2 - 0 Bolton W., West Bromwich A. 1 - 0 Middlesbrough, Liverpool 1 - 2 Manchester U., Newcastle U. 2 - 1 Everton, Leeds U. 1 - 2 Charlton Athletic.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	16	11	2	3	36	17	35
Liverpool	16	9	4	3	27	15	31
Chelsea	16	8	6	2	25	13	30
Man Utd	16	8	5	3	25	17	29
Everton	16	9	2	5	14	7	29
Newcastle	15	8	1	6	25	24	25
Middlesbrough	16	7	3	6	14	3	24
Tottenham	16	7	3	6	20	22	24
Blackburn	16	6	5	5	22	19	23
Southampton	15	5	5	5	17	7	20
Birmingham	16	5	5	6	16	19	20
Charlton	16	6	2	8	16	20	20
Man City	16	6	2	8	17	23	20
Fulham	16	5	4	7	21	22	19
Aston Villa	16	5	4	7	15	6	19
Leeds	16	5	2	9	20	24	17
West Brom	16	4	3	9	11	22	15
Sunderland	16	3	5	8	8	20	14
Bolton	15	3	4	8	17	27	13
West Ham	15	3	3	9	5	28	12

FIRST DIVISION

Brighton & Hove A. 0 - 1 Reading, Coventry C. 1 - 2 Preston North End, Gillingham 1 - 1 Stoke C., Grimsby T. 1 - 2 Leicester C., Millwall 1 - 0 Bradford C., Norwich C. 1 - 0 Derby County, Nottingham F. 2 - 1 Ipswich T., Portsmouth 3 - 2 Walsall, Sheffield U. 2 - 1 Crystal Palace, Watford 2 - 1 Burnley, Wimbledon 3 - 0 Sheffield W., Rotherham U. 0 - 0 Wolverhampton W.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Portsmouth	21	16	3	2	47	20	51
2. Leicester	21	13	5	3	33	20	44
3. Nottingham	21	11	6	4	38	26	39
4. Norwich	21	11	6	4	34	17	39
5. Reading	20	12	2	6	24	14	38
6. Sheffield U	21	10	5	5	33	24	35
7. Watford	21	10	4	7	27	29	34
8. Wolverhampton	20	9	6	5	38	21	33
9. Burnley	21	8	5	8	30	45	29
10. Millwall	21	8	5	8	23	46	29
11. Rotherham	21	7	7	7	32	25	28
12. Preston	21	6	10	5	34	33	28
13. Wimbledon	21	8	4	9	33	33	28
14. Crystal P	21	6	9	6	31	26	27
15. Coventry	21	7	6	8	25	29	27
16. Derby	21	8	3	10	24	28	27
17. Gillingham	21	6	7	8	21	28	25
18. Ipswich	19	6	5	8	24	23	23
19. Walsall	21	6	4	11	31	37	22
20. Bradford	21	4	7	10	21	38	19
21. Grimsby	21	4	5	12	23	41	17
22. Stoke	21	3	6	12	21	38	15
23. Sheffield W	21	2	7	12	16	35	13
24. Brighton	20	3	3	14	20	39	12

SECOND DIVISION

Queens Park R. 0 - 4 Cardiff C., Barnsley 2 - 2 Oldham Athletic, Blackpool 1 - 1 Notts County, Bristol C. 2 - 2 Crewe Alexandra, Cheltenham 1 - 0 Brentford, Chesterfield 1 - 0 Huddersfield T., Colchester U. 0 - 0 Plymouth Argyle, Port Vale 4 - 2 Mansfield T., Stockport County 2 - 1 Wycombe W., Swindon T. 1 - 1 Peterborough U., Tranmere R. 1 - 3 Luton T., Wigan Athletic 1 - 0 Northampton T.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Wigan	20	13	5	2	34	13	44
2. Cardiff	20	13	4	3	35	15	43
3. Oldham	20	11	6	3	34	14	39
4. Bristol C	19	12	2	5	40	23	38
5. Crewe	20	10	5	5	30	17	35
6. Queens PR	20	8	6	6	28	22	30
7. Luton	20	8	6	6	30	27	30
8. Chesterfield	20	9	3	8	17	21	30
9. Brentford	20	8	5	7	25	23	29
10. Blackpool	20	8	4	8	25	28	28
11. Tranmere	20	8	3	9	22	33	27
12. Port Vale	20	7	5	8	25	30	26
13. Plymouth	20	6	7	7	27	28	25
14. Northampton	20	7	4	9	21	25	25
15. Stockport	20	7	3	10	25	29	24
16. Barnsley	20	6	6	8	24	31	24
17. Wycombe	20	6	5	9	26	30	23
18. Swindon	20	6	5	9	24	30	23
19. Colchester	20	5	7	8	19	26	22
20. Cheltenham	20	5	6	9	19	25	21
21. Notts County	19	3	10	6	25	28	19
22. Peterborough	20	4	6	10	22	29	18
23. Huddersfield	20	4	6	10	15	24	18
24. Mansfield	20	4	3	13	32	53	15

FIXTURES

SATURDAY 7 DECEMBER

Aston Villa v Newcastle
Bolton v Blackburn
Charlton v Liverpool
Everton v Chelsea
Fulham v Leeds
Man Utd v Arsenal
Middlesbrough v West Ham
Southampton v Birmingham

SUNDAY 8 DECEMBER

Tottenham v West Brom

MONDAY 9 DECEMBER

Sunderland v Man City



WORLD

German Bundesliga

Werder Bremen scored twice in the last 10 minutes on Sunday to beat Stuttgart 3-1 and move into second place in the Bundesliga. Goncalves Ailton notched two of Bremen's goals, opening the scoring in the 26th minute and nailing an 89th-minute penalty to secure the win.

Between those two strikes Kevin Kuranyi equalised for Stuttgart in the 55th minute and Mladen Krstajic put Bremen back ahead in the 80th minute.

In the day's other game Schalke beat Hannover 2-0 on their own patch with two goals inside the first twenty minutes. Jorg Bohne grabbed the first for the visitors from the penalty spot in the 15th minute.

Emile Mpenza added a second in the 19th minute and that was enough to account for a Hannover side who have now not scored in just under five and a half hours of football. On Saturday, Bayern Munich had gone eight points clear at the top of the Bundesliga thanks to two strikes from Michael Ballack against Hertha Berlin.

Having been knocked out of the Champions League, Bayern were in the unusual situation of watching from the sidelines as Hertha beat Fulham 2-1 in the UEFA Cup in midweek. But the Bavarian



Michael Ballack celebrates one of his two goals for Bayern Munich.

giants asserted their domestic dominance with a 2-0 win that kept them eight points clear of Borussia Dortmund.

Dortmund followed up their Champions League win over Lokomotiv Moscow in midweek by coming from behind to claim a 2-1 victory at Nurnberg.

Nurnberg took the lead in the third minute when David Jarolim scored, but just as last week against 1860 Munich, Klaus Augenthaler's side could not hold onto their advantage. Dortmund mounted their second-half revival with goals from Lars Ricken in the 54th minute and Ewerthon in the 78th.

Kaiserslautern responded to an ultimatum from coach Eric Gerets by chalking up only their second

victory of the season against Wolfsburg. Gerets had warned his under-performing players to look for alternative employment if they failed to give 100% - and they responded by beating a side who last week humbled champions Borussia Dortmund. Vratislav Lokvenc's strike in the 15th minute edged the home side ahead and Cassio Lincoln made things more comfortable with a second and final goal in the 66th minute. Bayern Leverkusen threw away a lead for the second time in three days after losing out to Sergei Barbez's winner for Hamburg. Klaus Toppmoller's side, beaten 2-1 by Barcelona in midweek after Dimitar Berbatov had put them in front, pulled off a similar trick domestically by going down 3-2.

They led 2-1 thanks to Yildiray Basturk's 21st-minute strike but second-half goals from Bernardo Romeo and Barbez saw the visitors leave with all three points. Arminia Bielefeld took the honours in their derby clash with VfL Bochum. Bochum have outperformed their local rivals since both were promoted to the top-flight this season, but it was the visitors who came out on top thanks to a 3-0 victory. Goals from Benjamin Lense, Bastian Reinhardt and Momo Diabang late on gave Benno Mohlmann's side the much-needed three points, which saw them leap from 16th to 12th in the table.

Energie Cottbus scored three goals in the final 10 minutes to mount a brave but fruitless comeback against 1860 Munich.

The basement side showed the grit they will need to lift themselves out of their current poor position after the visitors had coasted into a 4-0 lead, thanks to goals from Markus Schroth (2),

Benjamin Lauth and Markus Weissenberger. But despite the efforts of Marko Topic, Radoslaw Kaluzny and Paulo Rink, the home side remain a point adrift at the foot of the table. Hansa Rostock claimed their first home win in 10 matches by beating Borussia Monchengladbach 3-1. Gladbach's away-day misery goes on though - they have not won on the road in seven attempts.

Marco Vorbeck gave the home side the lead in the 19th minute, and although the visitors equalised through an Igor Demo penalty in the 38th minute, they could not hold Hansa, who completed their victory thanks to a second-half double from Rade Prca.

Bayern Leverkusen 2 - 3 Hamburger SV, Bayern Munich 2 - 0 Hertha BSC, Bochum 0 - 3 Arminia Bielefeld, Energie Cottbus 3 - 4 Munich 1860, Hansa Rostock 3 - 1 Monchengladbach, Kaiserslautern 2 - 0 Wolfsburg, Nurnberg 1 - 2 Borussia Dortmund, Hannover 0 - 2 Schalke, Werder Bremen 3 - 1 Stuttgart.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. B.Munich	15	11	2	2	33	14	35
2. WerderBremen	15	9	2	4	31	26	29
3. Dortmund	15	7	6	2	21	12	27
4. Schalke	15	7	5	3	20	13	26
5. Stuttgart	15	6	6	3	25	18	24
6. 1860 Munich	15	7	3	5	24	20	24
7. Hamburger SV	15	7	2	6	20	22	23
8. Hertha	15	6	4	5	16	15	22
9. Wolfsburg	15	7	1	7	17	18	22
10. Bochum	15	6	3	6	29	26	21
11. Hansa Rostock	15	5	4	6	20	17	19
12. Bielefeld	15	5	3	7	18	24	18
13. Leverkusen	15	4	5	6	21	25	17
14. Nurnberg	15	5	2	8	19	25	17
15. M. gladbach	15	4	4	7	19	17	16
16. Hannover	15	4	3	8	22	32	15
17. Kaiserslautern	15	2	4	9	14	24	10
18. Cottbus	15	2	3	10	11	32	9

Spanish Primera Liga

Real Sociedad's Primera Division supremacy continued unabated as they secured a 2-1 win against an Barcelona side that ended with nine men. Patrick Kluivert put visitors Barcelona ahead on 33 minutes as his shot hit the post and then Real goalkeeper Sander Westerveld.

But that was the last celebration for Louis van Gaal's team as Darko Kovacevic scored either side of half-time. Things then got worse for Barcelona, who end the weekend still in tenth place, as Thiago Motta and Marc Overmars were both sent off late on for picking up second bookings.

Second-placed Mallorca were held 2-2 at Deportivo La Coruna. Deportivo took an early lead through Roy Makaay and Mallorca then had Ariel Ibagaza sent off for dissent but Walter Pandiani - playing against the club from which he is on loan - equalised with his eighth goal in five games, and the

visitors were ahead on the stroke of half time with a Samuel Eto'o penalty. But Deportivo continued to attack, and Makaay scored his tenth of the season 19 minutes from time to level.



Barcelona's Patrick Kluivert holds off Agustín Aranzabal of Real Sociedad.

Valencia are now four points behind Real after being held 0-0 at home by Deportivo Alaves. Rafael Benítez's side found no way past lowly Alaves and could face a spell without first-choice goalkeeper Santiago Canizares, who was taken off on a stretcher 15 minutes from the end after sustaining a knee injury in a collision with Jordi Cruyff.

Celta Vigo claimed fourth place as they won 2-0 at Real Valladolid. Catanha and Edu scored to keep Celta a point ahead of Real Betis Balompie, who beat Athletic Club Bilbao 1-0 with a goal from Marcos Assuncao.

Espanyol moved out of last place as they won 3-1 at home to Rayo Vallecano. Raul Tamudo and Alex Fernandez put Espanyol ahead, and although the latter player scored a late own goal, almost immediately Savo Milosevic found the net to ensure his side overtake Vallecano and RC Recreativo de Huelva, who returned to the bottom as they lost 1-0 to Villarreal CF, Victor on target in the 64th minute.

Racing Santander secured three vital points as they beat Malaga 1-0 with a goal from Pedro Munitis. Malaga ended the game down to nine men as Josemi was sent off in the 73rd minute and Fernando Sanz joined him in added time, both for two bookable offences.

Real Madrid's match with Sevilla was rescheduled to 2 January with the UEFA Champions League holders in Japan for the European/South America Cup match against

Paraguay's Club Olimpia on Tuesday.

Atletico Madrid missed their opportunity to move up from fifth in the table as they lost 1-0 at struggling Osasuna.

Osasuna earned only their third win of the season as a 62nd-minute goal from Argentinian midfielder player Gerardo Rivero proved to be decisive at the El Sadar stadium in Pamplona as Javier Aguirre's side had a rare taste of victory.

Osasuna 1 - 0 Atletico Madrid, Deportivo Alaves 0 - 0 Valencia, Espanyol 3 - 1 Rayo Vallecano, Racing Santander 1 - 0 Malaga, Real Betis 1 - 0 Athletic Bilbao, Valladolid 0 - 2 Celta de Vigo, Villarreal 1 - 0 Recreativo Huelva, Real Sociedad 2 - 1 Barcelona, Deportivo La Coruna 2 - 2 Mallorca.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. R.Sociedad	12	7	5	0	23	14	26
2. Mallorca	12	7	2	3	19	15	23
3. Valencia	12	6	4	2	20	7	22
4. Celta	12	6	3	3	15	8	21
5. Betis	12	5	5	2	20	12	20
6. Deportivo	12	5	4	3	17	16	19
7. R.Madrid	11	4	6	1	17	10	18
8. At.Madrid	12	4	6	2	18	13	18
9. Malaga	12	4	5	3	17	17	17
10. Barcelona	12	4	4	4	18	15	16
11. Athletic	12	4	3	5	18	23	15
12. Villarreal	12	3	5	4	12	12	14
13. Racing	12	4	2	6	12	13	14
14. Valladolid	12	4	2	6	11	16	14
15. Alaves	12	3	4	5	14	21	13
16. Osasuna	12	3	3	6	12	18	12
17. Sevilla	11	2	5	4	8	10	11
18. Espanyol	12	3	1	8	12	21	10
19. R.Vallecano	12	2	3	7	14	22	9
20. Rec de Huelva	12	2	2	8	9	23	8

FIXTURES

Sunday 8 December

Athletic Bilbao v Osasuna
Atletico Madrid v Valladolid
Celta Vigo v CD Alaves
Espanyol v Real Betis
Malaga v Villarreal
Mallorca v Real Madrid
Rayo Vallecano v Barcelona
Recreativo Huelva v D Coruna
Sevilla v Real Sociedad
Valencia v Racing Santander



DUTCH EREDIVISIE



Rafael van der Vaart netted a last-gasp winner to break Twente Enschede hearts and send Ajax back to the top of the Eredivisie table with a 2-1 win.

Van der Vaart had given Ajax the lead after 18 minutes but Twente hit back to level three minutes before the break through a Sjaak Polak penalty.

However Ajax were not to be denied and Van der Vaart popped up three minutes into time added on at the end of the game to secure all three points.

Feyenoord captain Paul Bosvelt struck an 89th-minute winner to hand his third-placed side all three points with a 2-1 home win against Utrecht.

The hosts went ahead after 34 minutes through Australian international Brett Emerton, only for Stefan Tanghe to level with 10 minutes remaining.

But with time running out, and Utrecht getting increasingly nervous, Bosvelt popped up to net from close range to send De Kuip into raptures.

John De Jong netted a late leveller to earn Heerenveen a 1-1 draw from their trip to fellow strugglers Groningen.

De Jong fired home 13 minutes from time to cancel out Glen Salmon's 62nd-minute opener for Groningen.

The result means Groningen remain in the bottom two while Heerenveen are just four points better off in 15th.

De Graafschap picked up their first point away from home this season after a battling 1-1 draw at Vitesse Arnhem.

The visitors even took the lead 12 minutes into the second period - Hans van der Haar getting his name on the scoresheet.

But Vitesse weren't to be denied a share of the spoils and Kalle Sone levelled four minutes later.

In Saturday's action, Willem II were no match for PSV Eindhoven as the hosts ran out 2-1 winners at the Philips Stadium in Eindhoven.

Already a goal behind after Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink had fired the home side ahead, Willem II's task was made even more difficult when Jatto Ceesay was dismissed for foul and abusive language with more than an hour to play.

PSV took full advantage, extending their lead through Mateja Kezman on the stroke of half-time.

Two minutes after the break Cedric van der Gun gave Willem II some hope but it was not enough and Guus Hiddink's side extended their run of home victories over their visitors to nine in the last 10 games.

NAC Breda maintained their unbeaten run at home with a 1-0 victory over RBC Roosendaal.

RBC have managed only five points on the road this season but appeared to be heading for their sixth before Kevin Bobson popped up to score the winner midway through the second half.

The result also gives NAC coach Henk ten Cate and his team a psychological edge as they go head-to-head with RBC again on Tuesday in the Amstel Cup.

AZ Alkmaar extended their unbeaten run under former Ajax coach Co Adriaanse to four matches with a comfortable 2-0 defeat of RKC Waalwijk.

AZ lost 5-1 in their first match after Henk van Stee was moved aside but they have not looked back since Adriaanse took the reins.

Here it was goals from defender Michael Buskermolen and midfielder Jan Kromkamp that sealed the victory in the second half and handed RKC only their second away defeat of the season.

Roda Kerkrade 2 - 0 FC Zwolle, NAC Breda 1 - 0 RBC Roosendaal, PSV Eindhoven 2 - 1 Willem II Tilburg, AZ Alkmaar 2 - 0 RKC Waalwijk, Ajax Amsterdam 2 - 1 FC Twente Enschede, FC Groningen 1 - 1 SC Heerenveen, Feyenoord Rotterdam 2 - 1 FC Utrecht, Vitesse Arnhem 1 - 1 De Graafschap.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Ajax	14	11	3	0	39	13	36
2. PSV	14	10	3	1	34	7	33
3. Feyenoord	14	9	2	3	32	15	29
4. Roda JC	14	6	5	3	26	20	23
5. Utrecht	14	6	5	3	20	15	23
6. NAC Breda	14	5	7	2	20	11	22
7. RKC Waalwijk	14	6	3	5	16	21	21
8. AZ Alkmaar	14	6	2	6	25	31	20
9. Willem II	14	5	3	6	21	21	18
10. Twente	14	4	5	5	16	22	17
11. Vitesse	14	4	4	6	16	15	16
12. RBC Roosendaal	14	4	3	7	19	22	15
13. NEC	13	4	3	6	17	26	15
14. Excelsior	13	3	4	6	15	23	13
15. Heerenveen	14	3	4	7	17	26	13
16. Zwolle	14	3	3	8	14	25	12
17. Groningen	14	2	3	9	13	25	9
18. De Graafschap	14	2	2	10	13	35	8



CHAMPIONS LEAGUE REVIEW



Lokomotiv v Dortmund 1-2, Milan v Madrid 1-0, Basel v Man. United 1-3, Deportivo v Juventus 2-2, Leverkusen v Barcelona 1-2, Newcastle v Inter 1-4, Roma v Arsenal 1-3, Valencia v Ajax 1-1.

Group A Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
1. Inter Milan	1	1	0	0	4	1	3	3
2. Barcelona	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
3. Bayer Leverkusen	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
4. Newcastle United	1	0	0	1	1	4	-3	0

Group B Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
1. Arsenal	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	3
2. Ajax	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1

3. Valencia	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
4. Roma	1	0	0	1	1	3	-2	0

Group C Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
1. Borussia Dortmund	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
2. AC Milan	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
3. Lokomotiv Moscow	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
4. Real Madrid	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0

Group D Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
1. Man Utd	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	3
2. D Coruna	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	1
3. Juventus	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	1
4. Basle	1	0	0	1	1	3	-2	0

FIXTURES

Tuesday 10 December 2002

UEFA Champions League Phase Two Group A
Inter Milan v Bayer Leverkusen
Barcelona v Newcastle United

UEFA Champions League Phase Two Group B
Ajax v Roma
Arsenal v Valencia

WEDNESDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2002

UEFA Champions League Phase Two Group C
Borussia Dortmund v AC Milan
Real Madrid v Lokomotiv Moscow

UEFA Champions League Phase Two Group D
Juventus v Basle
Man Utd v D Coruna



Ruud Van Nistelrooy of Man Utd celebrates after scoring his second goal against FC Basel.



GREEK ETHNIKI KATIGORIA



PAOK Thessaloniki took over the lead in the Hellenic National League lead after a thrilling 4-3 win at AEK Athens in the match of the season so far.

Nikos Froussos, Giannakis Okkas and Vangelis Nastos shook AEK by putting the visitors 3-0 up in the first 29 minutes, but the home team pulled two back before the break with a spectacular scissor kick from by Kostas Katsouranis and Demis Nikolaidis's penalty.

However, Okkas scored his second goal on the hour to double PAK's advantage, ensuring Vassilis Borbokis's effort 13 minutes from time proved only a consolation.

Olympiakos Piraeus conceded first place as they were held 0-0 at Aris Thessaloniki. Despite the scoreline, it was a lively game, with the home team on top in the first half and unbeaten Olympiakos having the best of the second period but proving unable to find the goal that would have prevented them falling to third place.

Iraklis ended the weekend in second thanks to a 1-0 win against Proodeftiki. Ieroklis Stolidis headed the only goal on 19 minutes to ensure Iraklis overtook Olympiakos and are level on points with

AEK.

Panathinaikos are fourth, but only two points off the lead, as their improvement in form continue with a 1-0 victory at home to PAS Giannina. Angelos Bassinas's 45th-minute free-kick sealed the win, with the home side well on top throughout the match as they remain unbeaten since 15 September.

Xanthi kept in touch with the leading teams courtesy of a 5-0 win against Egaleo. Dimitris Zografakis got the opener with a close-range shot on 26 minutes, but it was Stavros Labriakos who then took over as he scored twice before the break and once afterwards to seal the game with a hat-trick. His substitute, Austrian Guenther Friesenbichler, then made it 5-0 in the 88th minute. Xanthi are eighth but four points behind the leaders.

Elsewhere, bottom-placed Panahaiki lost 3-0 at OFI Crete, Kallithea and Panionios drew their derby 1-1, the same score as in the game at Ionikos FC, where Akrotiris FC were reduced to ten men with Stathis Stefanidis's sending-off but levelled five minutes from the end through substitute Lefteris Velentzas.

Iraklis Saloniki 1 - 0 Proodeftiki, Ionikos Nikea 1 - 1 Akrotiris, Kallithea 1 - 1 Panionios, OFI Crete 3 - 0 Panahaiki Patras, Xanthi Skoda 5 - 0 Egaleo Athens, Aris Saloniki 0 - 0 Olympiakos Piraeus, Panathinaikos 1 - 0 Giannina, AEK Athens 3 - 4 PAK Thessaloniki.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. PAK	9	5	3	1	23	14	18
2. Iraklis	9	5	3	1	13	6	18
3. Olympiakos	9	4	5	0	16	4	17
4. Panathinaikos	9	5	1	3	10	8	16
5. Aris	9	4	3	2	10	9	15
6. Xanthi	9	3	5	1	13	5	14
7. Panionios	9	4	2	3	10	7	14
8. AEK	9	4	2	3	13	11	14
9. Proodeftiki	9	3	4	2	10	8	13
10. Egaleo	9	2	5	2	7	9	11
11. Ionikos	9	2	4	3	6	13	10
12. OFI	9	2	3	4	9	11	9
13. Kallithea	9	2	3	4	8	11	9
14. Akrotiris	9	2	2	5	9	18	8
15. Giannina	9	1	2	6	7	13	5
16. Panahaiki	9	0	1	8	2	19	1



Scottish Premier League

Old Firm giants Celtic and Rangers continued to dominate at the top of the SPL with crushing wins on Sunday. Reigning champions Celtic stayed a point clear at the top with a 3-1 Parkhead defeat of Motherwell.

But their bitter rivals kept pace with an even more impressive success - 4-0 over Hearts at Tynecastle.

At Parkhead the Bhoys wasted an early chance to go ahead when Henrik Larsson of all people missed from the penalty spot just three minutes in.

But that blunder was forgotten when the super Swede did find the target to break the deadlock eight minutes into the second half.

Scott Leitch put through his own goal on 67 minutes as Celtic assumed total control, and Belgian defender Joos Valgaeren made it 3-0 five minutes later.

Dirk Lehmann pulled one back for 'Well 16 minutes from time, but it was scant consolation for Terry Butcher's side.

Meanwhile in the capital Rangers were making a tricky trip to Hearts look easy with a rampant second-half display.

After a goalless first period Alex McLeish's side went ahead on 52 minutes through Dutch defender Fernando Ricksen.

Six minutes later their task was made easier when Hearts defender Alan Maybury was red-carded for a second bookable offence.

With a numerical advantage to add to their superior talent level, the Ibrox side ran riot late on, netting three times in the last 11 minutes.

Skipper Barry Ferguson scored from the spot on 79 to make it 2-0, and Ricksen's second of the afternoon made it 3-0 two minutes later.

There was still time for Stephen Hughes to wrap things up in injury time with a fourth goal.

Partick Thistle striker Alex Burns stole the headlines in the SPL as he came off his sickbed to fire a hat-trick in a 3-0 win over Kilmarnock.

The Partick Thistle man, who had been rated no better than 50-50 to play because of a stomach bug, struck three times in the second half to give John Lambie's men three well-deserved points. Burns put Thistle in front in the 64th minute, lobbed his second in the 79th to double the lead and completed his treble by lofting the goalkeeper again three minutes from time.

Livingston and Dundee shared the spoils after a 1-1 draw in one of the most open and entertaining games seen at the City Stadium this season.

Striker Juan Camacho had given the home side a dream start when he volleyed them ahead with only 90 seconds on the clock. Dundee fought back to play their part in an exciting tussle but had to wait until the 70th minute to equalise thorough a Nacho Novo spot-kick.

Dundee United and Aberdeen shared the points after a dour 1-1 draw at Tannadice.



Celtic's Henrik Larsson celebrates his goal against Motherwell.

Two first-half penalties heralded a goal apiece by half-time, but neither side could build on that and cancelled each other out in the remaining 45 minutes.

Hibernian had to settle for a point after Dunfermline secured a 1-1 draw at East End Park.

Hibs took the lead shortly after the interval through Tom McManus but they were soon hauled back to level terms by the home side.

Jason Dair went on a great run before playing the ball to Stevie Crawford who rammed home to ensure a share of the points.

Dundee United 1 - 1 Aberdeen, Dunfermline 1 - 1 Hibernian, Livingston 1 - 1 FC Dundee, Partick Thistle 3 - 0 Kilmarnock, Celtic 3 - 1 Motherwell, Hearts 0 - 4 Rangers.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Celtic	17	15	1	1	51	9	46
2. Rangers	17	14	3	0	52	10	45
3. Dunfermline	17	8	3	6	30	33	27
4. Hibernian	17	8	1	8	25	26	25
5. Hearts	17	6	6	5	25	25	24
6. Dundee FC	17	5	6	6	20	26	21
7. Kilmarnock	17	5	4	8	16	31	19
8. Partick Thistle	17	4	6	7	16	27	18
9. Aberdeen	17	4	6	7	17	29	18
10. Livingston	17	4	4	9	22	26	16
11. Dundee U	17	3	5	9	16	30	14
12. Motherwell	17	2	3	12	17	35	9

French Ligue 1

Lyon returned to the top of Ligue 1 on Sunday afternoon after coming from behind to beat Strasbourg 2-1. Ulrich Le Pen gave the Alsacien side a shock 22nd-minute lead before Pegny Luyindula levelled matters for Lyon 12 minutes later.

Mahamadou Diarra struck four minutes after the interval to put the hosts ahead but they had to hold on against a spirited Strasbourg side who pushed everybody forward in search of goals.

Guingamp also bounced back from a goal down to win 2-1 at Lens and move into third. Antoine Sibierski put Lens ahead in the 21st minute but Hakim Saci levelled the game for Guingamp six minutes before half-time.

Florent Malouda hit the winner 10 minutes after the break to propel Guingamp up from sixth to within three points of the top of the table. And in Sunday's other game, Auxerre recovered from their UEFA Cup defeat in mid-week to pile more misery on under-achieving Bordeaux with a 1-0 victory.

The defeat to Real Betis was a blow for Guy Roux's side, but they have now put together back-to-back wins in the league.

Djibril Cisse's 36th-minute goal saw off Bordeaux's challenge and the visitors' misery was complete when they had Christophe Dugarry sent off for his second bookable offence in the closing minutes.

Monaco out-shone Paris Saint-Germain in the glamour clash of the French Ligue 1 while table-toppers Nice and high-flying Marseille suffered shock losses.

Shabani Nonda started for Monaco with a double in the 3-1 win over Paris Saint-Germain.

Ronaldinho had opened the scoring for PSG but Nonda netted a goal in each half to put the principality side in charge.

Mexican international defender Rafael Marquez sealed the win in the 79th minute to leave the title ambitions of PSG, now without a victory in five games, looking ragged. To add insult to injury for PSG, Francis Llacer was given a straight red card for a nasty-looking foul on Patrice Evra.

Monaco looked the better side throughout, mustering over 20 shots on goal to PSG's four. But it was PSG in their first attack who took the lead in the 24th minute when Ronaldinho, again linked with moves to England and Italy in this morning's French papers, netted.

The Brazilian, wearing the captain's armband, collected an Andre Luiz cross from the left, wrong-footed the Monaco defence before crashing his shot home.

The goal roused Monaco into life and they levelled 15 minutes later when Nonda netted his 10th goal of the season. His 11th saw Monaco take the lead in the 69th minute. The Congolese striker headed in after beating PSG keeper Lionel Letizy to a Souleymane Camara cross.

And Marquez killed the game as a contest 10 minutes later.

Jerome Rothen's cross was met with a powerful header by Vassilis Zikos which smacked against the post. Marquez collected and tucked the ball past Letizy. Nice are still lead Ligue 1 despite losing 3-0 at Sedan.

Henri Camara scored in each half and Serge Alain added a goal a minute from time for Sedan, who have just 19 points for the season - four points clear of the relegation zone. Marseille could have taken over the leadership but they crashed to a 2-0 defeat at fortress Bastia as 18-year-old Ben Saada scored twice in just his seventh league appearance. Bastia are the worst team in the league when it comes to playing on the road but they have won six of their nine home games. Regnes have struggled to score goals this season but they smashed five past Lille in a 5-1 demolition to give boss Vahid Halilhodzic victory over his old team. Olivier Monterubio's 22nd-minute penalty sparked Rennes into life, followed by Olivier Echouafni's goal.

Marama Vahirua opened the scoring for the home team in the 32nd minute, Frederic da Rocha added the second early in the second half and Nicolas Gillet converted a late spot-kick after Bruno Carotti had halved the deficit.

Both teams had a man sent off as Nantes' Mario Yepes and opponent Habib Bamogo received their marching orders on 71 minutes.

A Wilson Oruma strike in the 66th minute gave Sochaux a 1-0 win over Troyes, who are now third from bottom. In the day's other game, a strike eight minutes from time by Jean-Michel Lesage gave Le Havre a dramatic 2-1 away win over AC Ajaccio, who led at the break.

Monaco 3 - 1 Paris S.G., Ajaccio 1 - 2 Le Havre, Bastia 2 - 0 Marseille, Nantes 3 - 1 Montpellier, Rennes 5 - 1 Lille, Sedan 3 - 0 Nice, Sochaux 1 - 0 Troyes, Lens 1 - 3 Guingamp, Lyon 2 - 1 Strasbourg, Auxerre 1 - 0 Bordeaux.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Lyon	17	9	4	4	34	21	31
2. Nice	17	8	6	3	21	10	30
3. Guingamp	17	8	4	5	26	19	28
4. Marseille	17	8	4	5	17	17	28
5. Sochaux	17	7	6	4	18	13	27
6. Auxerre	16	8	3	5	17	15	27
7. Monaco	17	7	5	5	25	18	26
8. Nantes	17	7	4	6	20	18	25
9. Strasbourg	17	7	4	6	22	27	25
10. PSG	17	6	6	5	26	19	24
11. Lens	17	6	6	5	17	16	24
12. Bordeaux	17	6	5	6	18	17	23
13. Lille	17	6	5	6	15	20	23
14. Bastia	17	6	3	8	18	24	21
15. Sedan	16	5	4	7	19	22	19
16. Ajaccio	17	4	5	8	13	19	17
17. Le Havre	17	3	7	7	13	22	16
18. Troyes	17	3	6	8	13	19	15
19. Montpellier	17	3	6	8	14	23	15
20. Rennes	17	3	5	9	14	21	14

Alain's Corner



Alain Barataud

THE BEST PLAYER IN THE WORLD

France Football, infamous bible of football for specialists and supporters alike, last week announced its annual nominations of fifty players who are to compete for the beautiful Golden Ball Award - an honor that most players dream of - as Best Player of the Year. With the exception of probably the best candidate ever, Pele, the biggest names in football have laid claim to this coveted award.

The list of past winners is interesting. Platini (receiving the compliment consecutively) Cruyff and Marco Van Basten, all collected the award three times. Beckenbauer, Keegan, Rummenigge and Real Madrid legend, Di Stefano received the crown twice while other prizewinners were Baggio, Gullit, Ronaldo, Rivaldo, Figo and Weah etc... Last year's jury decided upon Michael Owen as the winner, with maybe a more deserving Raul as runner up.

It doesn't look like Michael Owen can keep the title as Roberto Carlos and Mickael Ballack came out the clear favourite for their outstanding season. Roberto Carlos won this year both the World Cup and Champion's League as Ballack lost his two final with Leverkusen and one with Germany against Brazil. It could even be Roberto Carlos' teammates Zidane or Raul who both put in great performances, winning the Champions League with Real Madrid and scoring a goal in the final, which could topple Carlos for the glory. As well, it's always more difficult for a defender to win the award.

One player, Thierry Henry, had a great year with his club, Arsenal, and may well give everyone a run for their money, especially if he continues to score in the way he did last week in the Champions League against Roma and if he keep up his form he could well win the title. The man Europeans describe as the Best Striker in the World may simply be the Best Player in the World. Henry said, "After reading the nominations, the Best Player in the World for me is Zinedine Zidane. Nobody can compete with him - he is in a class of his own." Henry thinks Raul will win the supreme award though for Owen, his own beautiful award aside, the two favourites are Raul and Henry.

What's happened to Ronaldo? If you take a closer look at how Brazil came to be World Champions playing teams like China or Costa Rica, really you can say he had a very good World Cup but nothing particularly special and after playing only a few games with Inter Milan and Real Madrid, Ronaldo's total of approximately twenty games this year is a far cry away from teammate Roberto Carlos or Zidane. Ballack, Raul and Henry who have all played around sixty games this year. A lot of players have remarked that Ronaldo doesn't deserve the best player award - best comeback, for sure - hopefully, the jury will be honest and nominate one of the four aforementioned players. Should Ronaldo gain the title it will be a shame and an injustice to those players who have yet to win. Zidane was quoted, "If I don't win, it doesn't matter. I know who is the best player in the world!"

Among the fifty players nominated, some continents missed out on representatives. Last year Harry Kewell made the list for Oceania - but our players were absent this time around. Eight players from World Champions, Brazil, and seven from France made the list scoring the two countries the honours of most players in the line up, followed by Italy and Spain.

Real Madrid has already proved that the Spanish club is the best club in the Spanish League and the world and therefore only proves the reason for having so many players nominated. The huge surprise is the Calcio, supposedly the best League in the past few years that usually is represented by twenty-odd players in the nominations - this year only nine ended up making the grade.

In other news, Lyon took control of the French League this weekend with their victory over Strasbourg who is going to have a tough game away this Wednesday in Paris for the game of the week.

See you next week.

NATIONAL LEAGUE ACTION BETWEEN NORTHERN SPIRIT AND MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

Photos By
Carlos Furtado

